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## NBW #1264

Typescript autobiography of  
**George Runels,**  
including his whaling voyage aboard the  
*Benezet* (bark) of Fairhaven,  
Charles A. Parker, master,  
December 1, 1840 – lost on the Fiji Islands, 1842.

This document, GRunels.doc is a copy of the autobiography of George Runels (born Feb. 3, 1823 in Warner N.H.; died June 5, 1911 in Lowell MA). He shipped out of New Bedford on the Benizette, December 1840. Much of his autobiography describes his adventures during 4 years in the South Seas.

George Runels later settled in Lowell MA, where he established a successful stone-cutting business. He was a prominent citizen and served as Mayor in 1882. He is buried in the Lowell Cemetary on Lawrence St; his monument features a ship's anchor.

No hand-written version of the autobiography exists; indeed, we think that the original autobiography was typed. Today, a few family members have faded copies of a double-spaced typed version on 8.5 x 14 inch paper.

The manuscript was typed into the computer by a family friend, Suzanne Spencer, M.D., Seattle Washington, in 2005. I have compared it line by line with the earlier typed version in my possession, and have corrected any typographical errors that I found in the computer version, so that the text of the computer version corresponds to my earlier typed version.

Dr. Spencer added the footnotes and inserted the illustrations, so the footnotes and illustrations are not part of the historical document. I have not checked the accuracy of the footnotes.

We think George Runels wrote down his life story around the year 1883. Three reasons support this date:

- He contributed a brief writeup of his life for the History of Warner published in 1879. Was he urged to write down his life story as a result? (The first page of the autobiography is very similar wording to the writeup in the History of Warner)
- When describing his trip across Panama in 1850, he refers to the mud and states "There is some of it that shows on my trunk to this day, thirty-three years".
- The 1879 Warner History states that George Runels "retired from active work" the previous year; perhaps that gave him the leisure to write. (He was Mayor of Lowell in 1882.)

He must have referred to his earlier diaries when he wrote his account, as many of the descriptions and time sequences are too detailed to have been from memory. He specifically refers to his earlier diary in the case of his journey across Panama.

Note that the History of Warner gives the year of his trip to California as 1849 - 1850, whereas his autobiography clearly states he started for California on Sept. 25, 1850 and departed San Francisco for the trip home on Jan. 10, 1851.

The autobiography ends abruptly after describing a stone-cutting job in 1859-1860 ... Did he intend to write more? Or did he think that there was no need to record recent events that were well known to his family and associates?

Martha Hanner (great-great-granddaughter)  
Amherst MA, August 2006



**George Runels** born in Warner, New Hampshire, Feb. 3.

1823 resided at home until 14 years of age, when my father died, my mother having died several years earlier; went to live with my brother Daniel; lived with him two years or thereabouts. Then went to live with my Uncle Daniel George who was my Guardian; lived with him about four months, then went to work for Levi Bartlett<sup>1</sup> and Noyes Rand, half the time for each, for four months, then went to school at New London for three months, and three months at District school

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.warner.nh.us/ehist3.htm> History is edited from the original text written in 1885 by Fred Myron Colby. It is part of the Warner section in the "Red Book", a book with history of all towns in Belknap and Merrimack Counties published in 1885. Also segments were edited and updated from the "Warner, N.H. History 1880-1974. He was in his 92 year when this history came out.

" Levi Bartlett, oldest son of Joseph Bartlett, was born in Warner, N.H., April 29, 1793 d. after 1880.

His grandfather, Simeon Bartlett, of Amesbury, Mass. (a brother of Governor Josiah Bartlett, of Kingston, N. H., who was first after General Hancock to vote for and to sign the " Declaration of Independence"), was one of the original proprietors of the town of Warner, and he gave to his three sons, Joseph, Richard and Simeon, valuable tracts of land in the then newly settled township. Levi Bartlett, of Warner, was early employed in his father's store, at the Lower village. A country store was then, even more than now, the centre of all masculine gatherings for the interchange of news and political and religious ideas. He pursued this avocation for several years but the passion for agriculture, which had all this time found vent in the cultivation of fruits and flowers, grew too powerful to be resisted, and he left what was fast becoming a lucrative employment for the pursuit of farming, which he has since followed.

He began at once to write for agricultural papers, experimented largely in different ways of managing crops, adopted most of the new theories of scientific men in relation to the constitution of the soil and its adaptation to certain growths, etc. His opinions and writings were favorably received, and he, as pioneer in a new field, since pretty thoroughly investigated, was considered "authority" on most points relating to improved agriculture.

In 1834, Mr. Bartlett was invited to become a regular contributor to the *New England Farmer*, and from that date till after he had passed his eightieth year he wrote regularly for various agricultural periodicals. He was special correspondent and associate editor of *The Boston Journal of Agriculture* during its brief life. He wrote constantly for the *Country Gentleman*, occasionally for the *Farmer's Monthly Visitor*, *The Statesman* and *Manchester Mirror* and many other papers. He was for a time associate editor of the *Boston Cultivator*. His writings have been published in various States of the Union, and not infrequently copied into English papers. "

at Warner, boarding with my brother until the first day of April, 1840, when I started for Lowell, on foot, with a knapsack which I made from bed-ticking, and about thirty-five pounds baggage; I arrived in Lowell about six o'clock, coming from Nashua in the cars; they were the first I had seen. I inquired my way to #37 Boot Corporation, to Mrs. Straw's, where I made it my home until I could get work; my whole capital consisted of eight dollars when I started, and in the neighborhood of seven dollars and twenty-five cents when I arrived in Lowell. I did not stir around much the next day, being very lame, but the third day I went to work for Gardner K. Eastman learning the stone cutter's trade; I went to work for three months for my board, which was \$1.50 per week, working from five in the morning until seven at night, thirty minutes out for breakfast, and forty-five minutes for dinner; after working out my time—about one-half of which I worked in the blacksmith shop--I went to Quincy, or rather Milton, and worked a few weeks, was taken sick, and went to Warner to my brother's, staying three weeks, then started with Henry Carter on a peddler's cart to follow around the country musters, attending five per week for about four weeks, selling at auction on the muster fields; he was peddling for Marsh, Capen and Lyons<sup>2</sup> of Concord; it was a very exciting trip for boys, for were nothing else, but we made a good thing for the owners; I left Carter at our last muster, Amherst, where his father lived and came back to Lowell, and went to work for John Folsom; his yard was back of the Market house where the lower end of the Carpet mill now stands: I learned my trade on Middle Street near where Joyce's liquor store is now. I worked for Folsom until Dec., was at work part of the time on the Mass. Corp., leveling stone for railway track, and jobbing on #2 mill which was not finished.

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<sup>2</sup> This appears to be a Boston Publishing house in that era. S. Spencer June 29, 2005.

I got acquainted with Charles Parker, who had followed the sea as a whale man; he had a brother, Isaac, who was an auctioneer, as was his father; he was a brother of F.H. Nourse's wife; he was going whaling from Fairhaven, and I concluded to go with him.

I went to Boston and stayed two days and then went to New Bedford and stayed three or four days until the vessel was ready to sail; we sailed sometime in Dec.<sup>3</sup> in the barque Benizette of about two hundred and fifty tons burden; we had it very rough for the first three days out, and was obliged to heave to under fore- and staysail, and came very near going onto Nantucket Shoals, but it moderated and we clawed off; we arrived in sight of the Cape de Verde Islands<sup>4</sup> in about six weeks; I was not seasick at all and was the only one that was not; one man never got over it while on board and we left him at Port a Prayer on the consul's hands; here I got my first sight of a volcano; I have forgotten the name of the Island; we landed about sixty miles from Port a Prayer on the coast, it being calm, and went ashore to a plantation; the natives or negroes were very nearly naked, and they being the first I had seen, naturally attracted a great deal of attention.

<sup>3</sup> Record book at New Bedford museum states "bark Benezet, 192 tons", sailed Dec 1, 1840



<sup>4</sup> © Lonely Planet Cape de Verde Islands in Atlantic. Made up of Creole: mix of African, Portuguese, Mediterranean and Latin influence. Speak Portuguese.

The scenery was beautiful, and I not being used to tropical scenes, it made more impression on me than it would otherwise, Mountains four or five miles back, rose to thousands of feet, and almost as pointed as spires, wholly of rock, while in the foot-hills and along shore were plantations of fruit, cane etc.; we loaded two boats with oranges, certainly twenty bushels, or more, for which we gave three or four cotton handkerchiefs, and one or two one-bladed jack-knives, but we did not get much the best of the natives at that, we being mostly all green; nine-tenths of the oranges were the native fruit, bitter and sour.

The next day we arrived at Port a Prayer and anchored; it was only a roadstead, partly sheltered. We went on shore and landed under a bluff, the fort being directly above, some hundred feet, I should judge, with a very steep road leading up under the wall. It was laughable to see the guard on the walls, three or four negroes with hardly a semblance of clothing, and an old musket, marching back and forth. The islands belonged to the Portuguese, and there were not more than three or four hundred of them on the island, except the mixture with the negroes. The town lies back of the fort on high land, the houses all one story. There were no carriages on the island, except two-wheeled carts, the wheels made of a solid piece of wood with a large wooden axle, and no grease; they made a very musical noise, about half way between a jackal and a screech owl. The traffic was almost wholly on Jacks, about the size of a large sheep; they looked curious with large panniers filled with all conceivable things piled up and around, until all you could see was a couple of ears and a tail; then a negro on top. I took my first and last ride here on one of them; three or four of us hired one each to go back to a very beautiful plantation, three or four miles; we each mounted one and had to hold up our feet to keep

them from dragging, while a nigger boy took hold of their tails, and with a long stick, licked up behind; it was a procession that would have been noticed in any city as we wound among the hills, but we had to embark again at night.

We laid in a better stock of oranges here; we got thirty or forty bushels, all we could dispose of before they would decay. We stopped but two days here; we shipped three Portuguese to fill out our crew and sailed southwest for the equator; when near the line we lay for three weeks in a calm; we did not get but about sixty miles in the whole time; that was my first experience of hot weather; the decks were so hot that they would burn your feet, in the middle of the day, and the pitch would bubble in the seams. We finally struck the southeast trade winds and ran down to 25 degrees South, and were nearly over to Rio; vessels going round the Cape of Good Hope usually ran nearly across the Atlantic three times. We rounded the Cape about one hundred and twenty miles south of it, and struck across the Indian Ocean. The first land after leaving the Cape de Verde Islands were the islands of St. Paul and Amsterdam. At St. Paul we went inshore to fish; the kelp grows out a mile from shore and in twenty fathoms of water, and so thick in some places that we could scarcely pull a boat through it. We fished about an hour and got four or five hundred pounds of fish which were very nice; they would follow our hooks to the top of the water after a little while and we could gaff them. We went inshore, and pulled into a bay that was a quarter of a mile across, and not more than one hundred feet across at the entrance, and three or four feet of water; it was an old crater with very abrupt sides, on one side four or five hundred feet high; there are some hot springs where the water almost boils, and the stones are very hot; in many places steam was coming from the crevices. There were no inhabitants on the island, and no game except a few wild goats. I should



think the island might be four miles across, and nearly round. We stayed here but a few hours, then steered east; the next land we saw was Vandemon Land<sup>5</sup>, and that only at a distance, and a few days after sighted East Cape on the island of New Zealand, and ran into the Bay of Islands, as it was called. We had to run up a narrow passage a number of miles, and then came into a magnificent bay five or six miles long, and one to two miles wide, with five to twenty fathoms of water, entirely land-locked as any lake; here we lay for a couple of weeks and had a run ashore. I think it was in June<sup>6</sup> when we arrived there, having been seven months out and it was their coldest season; the weather was very comfortable, they having a frost only occasionally. The town consisted of but a single row of houses facing a long beach; the houses were mostly stores, as there were but very few white women in the town. There was a native village a short way back of the upper end of the village, and on a point about one mile up the bay were the barracks and a fort, a mere earth-work; here there were a few companies of soldiers; still farther up above a small island, was the American consul's, who had the neatest place on the bay; still farther up at the upper end of the bay, was what they called the Par; it was the name of a native village surrounded with a palisade. There was a man who kept a hotel, and lumbered up some six miles on a creek. On the opposite side of the bay, opposite the barracks, was the missionary establishment, chapel, schools, etc. and just above and back a mile, was the great tree of the species called the Caurie, or New Zealand pine; the tree was said to be twenty-five feet in diameter; but they were not a long-bodied tree, like our pine, but more like the oak, with a body twenty to forty feet long, and immense limbs. I learned more of this place and its surroundings afterwards, as I spent some time here.

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<sup>5</sup> West Tasmania

<sup>6</sup> 1841

After laying in a stock of potatoes and fresh pork and such vegetables as we could get, we sailed for a cruise. There is some beautiful natural scenery as you leave this harbor; just outside to the eastward, there is a natural arch in the rocks, high and wide enough for a large vessel to pass through. We sailed north into latitudes from 20 degrees to 12 degrees south; cruising for whale, and in the next six months took quite a number, making about five hundred barrels of oil.<sup>7</sup> You must know that whales have regular cruising grounds for the season, in the South Pacific; in the winter months, that is from May to November, the whales lay along the low latitudes and have their regular feeding grounds, coming inshore on the full of the moon, from five to fifteen miles, and going off shore in the old of the moon, fifty or a hundred miles; the vessels cruise accordingly, running in among the islands, when the whales are most apt to be found, and then off.

The sperm whale feeds on a fish called squid, some of which are very large, but the large ones are never seen except parts of them as they are a fish that lie near the bottom; I have seen a whale vomit up a piece a foot through, and eight or ten feet long. It was one of the long tentacles or pointed parts that runs from the head around the body; there are squid of all sizes, and the large are evidently shaped the same as the small ones along our shore; some contend that the large ones are as large as the whale, judging from the pieces seen.

We cruised around the Fijees and the neighborhood of the Navigator Islands, and so north to the island of Rotumah, which lay 10 or 12 degrees south of the line and in longitude nearly opposite Greenwich. We ran in and anchored in a roadstead, sheltered by a small island; we lay here some six days. It is a beautiful island; about fifteen miles long and eight wide, almost wholly covered with wood, to view from the shore, although there were many openings where the natives cultivated the yam, taro, sugar-cane,

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<sup>7</sup> The largest squid on record per Internet resources is 18 meters.

bananas, bread fruit, etc.; cocoanuts were very abundant, and the woods abounded in wild hens, the same as our domestic ones, but as wild as partridge, and the crowing was very cheering about daybreak. There were one or two thousand natives on the island, and two white men that lived there at that time. It was very healthy, and about the only disease they had was the elephantine<sup>8</sup>, which was more or less in all the tropical Pacific. I was very much surprised at the first canoe load of natives that came off to the vessel when we anchored; all the natives that I had seen before were very dark and repulsive looking; when the canoe came in alongside, I thought they were all women, and some of them not bad looking ones at that, but they were all men; they reversed the order of things somewhat there; the men had long beautiful hair, while the women wore theirs cut off.

The chief that came on board was a young man of perhaps about twenty-five, lithe and supple, handsome features, hair that was black at the head and reaching to the waist, terminated in a kind of golden brown; they all wore about two yards of cotton cloth around their loins, reaching to the knees; their color is a rich olive tint not much darker than a Spaniard, exposed as they are to the tropical sun; they wore nothing on the head, and have some peculiar customs; all unmarried women had their hair filled with a white paste, that looks like lime mortar, which is dried into the hair and makes them literally white-heads, and that was the name they were known by. The natives were very friendly and we roamed on shore on alternate days while there; one watch one day, and the other the next, and luxuriated in fruits to our heart's content. I spent one night on shore, the first since leaving America. We left in a hurry however; we had been getting our provisions on board, and were calculating to stay only until the next day; we had taken about twenty-five hogs on deck, and the fruit was rather helter-skelter about deck, when

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<sup>8</sup> Unclear if this is lymph edema caused by filariasis

about four o'clock, we saw a very black cloud rising over the island; all hands were called and we hove up anchor, and made sail as quickly as possible, and we were none too soon, for the squall struck us within ten minutes after shooting out past the small island, and we began to take in sail as fast as we had made it, and by the time we had everything snug, it was blowing fearfully and as dark as darkness seven times distilled, except in the flashes of lightning, which was about half of the time, when it was as bright as noon-day; we took every sail off the vessel, except the spanker, and for four or five hours, I have never seen such a scene, the hogs being loose on deck, were going from weather to lee side, as the vessel lurched, and instead of staying there would clamor to windward again only with the next lurch to repeat the operation; then casks, loose cocoanuts, bananas, and other kinds of fruit bouncing around the deck, the lightning playing on topsail sheets, and the thunder crashing almost incessantly about our heads; it was a scene never to be forgotten; the rain poured in perfect torrents, and taken in all its aspects. I have never seen anything so startling. We had stopped our pumps and fastened down our hatches at the commencement; I was at the wheel through the hardest of the storm and for more than three hours, no one thinking to relieve me, and I not thinking of time; at one clap of thunder and flash of lightning a man by the name of White was standing just forward of the main mast holding on to a rope. I saw him pitch forward on to his face and at the next flash, he lay as he fell; I supposed him dead as I distinctly saw the lightning flashing on the chain sheets at his back, but on the next flash I saw him get up and although he was bewildered for a short time, was not hurt; I never want to pass another such four hours as we passed that evening. By twelve o'clock it was as clear and beautiful as you can imagine a tropical night. We made sail, gathered up what fruit that

had not been washed overboard, or spoiled, counted up our hogs, having lost six or eight through the port holes, which had burst open by the hogs pitching against them when they lurched to leeward. We then washed decks, for a dirtier one could not be imagined; the hogs not having got their sea-legs, had vomited all over everything that could be reached; hogs, like humans, get seasick before they get their sea-legs on. After setting things to rights we steered south, and worked down into the southern grounds but did not have much luck, got only one or two whales. We went into Norfolk Island<sup>9</sup>, lying in about twenty six degrees south, I think, northeast of New Holland about one thousand miles; it was an English convict island; there is no harbor, and we anchored under the lee of the island, but they did not allow vessels to land except in distress; we pulled ashore and told the guard we had scurvy on board; the Commandant gave us permission to land; we went up about half a mile and gathered about twenty bushels of lemons, got some potatoes, etc. It is one of the most charming places you will see in the Pacific; viewed from the water the shore is very bold, and only on the side where we landed, it sloped to the shore for fifty rods or so; the rest of the shore is from fifty to one hundred feet perpendicular all around the island so far as we could see. The island is six or eight miles across, nearly round and attains an altitude of five or six hundred feet, I should think, and three-quarters of it was covered with the Norfolk Island pine, a very graceful tree growing tapering like our sapling pine, and colored like it, only taller and more graceful. There was a fort on the hill, not at the top, but at an elevation of three or four hundred feet, and a beautiful green slope to the landing; there were eighteen hundred prisoners on the island and six hundred soldiers; many of the prisoners were political, and roamed around at

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<sup>9</sup> The descendents of the HMS Bounty mutineers left Pitcairn Island in 1856 to settle on Norfolk Island. This was 16 years after George Runel's account. <http://www.norfolkisland.com.au/HistoryAndCulture/convict.cfm>

large, but were shut into the barracks at night, there being no prison as we regard it; they had lots of things to sell, some of them very fancy, and we could trade with them if we had anything to buy with, but we had nothing except tobacco, and that we were not allowed to trade to them, but we gave them what we had in our pockets, the guards winking at it and they gave some rings of bone with shell inlaid, and little nick-nacks of that kind.<sup>10</sup> We left the island the same night, and cruised westward, toward the Tongo Islands. We were frequently in company for two or three days with other vessels, whalemens, and used to go gamming, as they call it; that is, one captain and boat's crew would go on board the other vessel, and spend the afternoon and evening, have some grog, get supper, sing songs and tell stories, and so back and forth sometimes for a week, almost every day. Whale ships when on cruising ground, only carry a moderate amount of sail, and heave to nights, or only carry fore-sail and main-top-sail, so that when no whales are around, it is very lazy work. There are always two men at the mast-head from early morning to sundown, one at the fore, one at the main, unless it is blowing a gale, and when you hear the long drawn out, "There she blows", everything changes in an instant; the officer of the deck jumps into the rigging, and sings out, "Where away", the man answering according to the direction of the spout, for instance, "Three points on the lee bow, about two miles off"; the officer says to the man at the wheel, "Keep her off", the man at the mast head repeating, "There she blows", as he sees each spout, and if sperm whale, he says "Sperm Whale", or "There is a school of them", as the case may be;

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<sup>10</sup> In 1825 a settlement was established for the worst convicts from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. It was officially described as "a place of the extremist punishment, short of death". Conditions were harsh and inhumane; often triggering murders, mutinies and escape attempts by the convicts. The only exception was the period from 1840 to 1844 when the treatment of prisoners improved dramatically under Captain Alexander Maconochie, an enlightened prison reformer. <http://www.norfolkisland.com.au/HistoryAndCulture/convict.cfm>

everybody is on deck the instant they are pronounced sperm whale, the order is given to clear away boats; the ship runs down within half a mile or so of where they are seen, if there is a good breeze, if not, they take to the boats at once, and pull near to where seen; sperm whales usually spout from ten to thirty times when they come up, spouting once in one or two minutes, and then going down and staying from fifteen to fifty minutes, rarely more than an hour, and if not galled (scared) usually come up within a quarter of a mile of where they went down, unless traveling from one ground to another, when it will be two or three miles, and if scared, six or seven miles. I do not know of a prettier sight than a large school of whales at play; they sometimes go in schools from twenty to one hundred or more, and are all about of a size, the males in a school together, the whalers designating them "forty barrel bulls"; the cows and calves go together, and usually a mile or two to windward of them, an old bull whale, who will make from sixty-five to one hundred and twenty barrels of oil; the cows usually make from twenty to forty barrels, a young bull from thirty-five to fifty barrels.

The whalers, when they get into a school of cows and calves, always fasten to the calf, as they are then sure of the cow, and if they get into a school, they do not try to kill their whale until some of the other boats get fast, for the instant one spouts blood, they all start like race-horses to windward, but frequently, when you fasten to one, the others will huddle right around him. We were fastened to one, I recollect, and for two or three minutes, we could not get our oars into the water, they were spouting into our faces, and their breath is not very sweet; I put my hand on one's nose, and pushed the boat away; we were fast to one, and did not care to drive double teams without a pole, for fear they might "haul"; we lanced one of them, however, and picked him up later. When at play,

they will throw themselves entirely out of the water, and come down square on their bellies; what the whalers "breaching"; you can see one breach ten miles; it will throw the water up more than fifty feet. Then some of them will stand on their heads with their tails out of the water some fifteen or twenty feet, and make it go like a whiplash, back and forth, and it will be all foam around them; they call this "laptailing"; then you will see one come head out of water and stand for two or three seconds with his head in the air full thirty feet, to look around, and they will roll and tumble like kittens. A whale will make a bellowing noise when wounded, which can be heard half a mile, and they have some way of communication through the water; you set a whale to spouting blood in a school, with an old whale one or two miles to windward and within two minutes, he will be gallied; you can tell when whales are gallied as quickly as you can a herd of cattle scared, and if you are not fast to them before they get gallied, it is seldom you can get them, unless they get quieted, not being badly gallied.<sup>11</sup>

We had quite a little incident a short distance west of Norfolk Island; we were cruising in company with another vessel, when we sighted a whale: both vessels lowered their boats, and ran down for him; he was to leeward about two miles; their Captain's and our Mate's boats were ahead; there were seven boats in the water; the whale went down about the time we started from the ship; we hoisted sail and pulled, for the vessel that gets an iron into a whale first, holds the whale, according to whaling rules; we were scattered for a half a mile, no one knowing where he would come up, as we could not see which

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<sup>11</sup> Gallied must be a term quite familiar to whalers. In Chapter 87 of *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville writes this passage: "Had these Leviathans been but a flock of simple sheep, pursued over the pasture by three fierce wolves, they could not possibly have evinced such excessive dismay. But this occasional timidity is characteristic of almost all herding creatures. Though banding together in tens of thousands, the lion-maned buffaloes of the West have fled before a solitary horseman. Witness, too, all human beings, how when herded together in the sheepfold of a theatre's pit, they will, at the slightest alarm of fire, rush helter-skelter for the outlets, crowding, trampling, jamming, and remorselessly dashing each other to death. Best, therefore, withhold any amazement at the strangely gallied whales before us, for there is no folly of the beasts of the earth which is not infinitely outdone by the madness of men."



way he was going when he went down, but he came up about a quarter of a mile to leeward of our mate's, and the other Captain's boat; they both pulled with all their might, and had their sail set, when, within a hundred feet or so, the other Captain ordered sail down, as he was twenty-five feet or so ahead of the mate's boat, and it being very dangerous to run into a whale with the sail set; the mate saw that if he took in sail, the Captain would get the whale, so he sang out to the boat steerer to stand up, and run onto the whale broadside on; the boat-steerer struck the whale without letting go of his own iron pole, the whale's back being just out of the water; almost the same instant that the boat was on the whale's back, it rounded up its back four or five feet out of the water, and the boat was bottom up as quickly as you could turn your hand; the boat I was in, was not more than one hundred feet away, and in a few seconds we were up to them, they having hold of boat or oars, with one exception; the whale had gone down, and the rounding out of his body was the act of going down; one of the crew was not to be seen for nearly or quite a minute, when up came he four or five rods ahead, and burst out laughing and sang out, "I knew I could hold him"; when the boat capsized, the line had got a turn around his legs and took him down as near as we could judge, fully twenty fathoms and nothing but the whale's rising to the surface saved him, for as long as the line was tight, he could not get away; we took him aboard, and it was three weeks before he could do anything; it had taken the skin of his leg for six inches, no other man on board could have got out of it so well; he was a Kanaker, and like a duck in water. We picked up the line that was fast to the whale, and killed him; he made seventy barrels of oil, and worth at the price of oil then, about three thousand dollars. There is a good deal of excitement in being after whales; the boat that gets fast first can ride, the others have to pull, unless they can get

fast to the whale, which is seldom the case, as he usually starts directly to the windward, and goes faster than a boat can pull; we got fast to one at one time a short distance from the ship; the Captains boat got fast and the whale ran out all the line sounding, although they held him in all they could, and it takes the weight of two thousand pounds to box down a whaleboat; when their line was almost out, they threw the end to our boat and we bent our line on it, then they threw it out of their chocks, and we had him; he sounded four hundred fathoms before he rose, and we commenced to haul in; when he came up, he was a quarter of a mile off, and before we could haul in the line to come up to him, he sounded again, although not so deep as before, and kept going like a race-horse directly to windward; it was pretty rough, and sometimes the boat as it left the top of a sea would jump almost to another one and every time we would try to haul onto him to lance him, he would sound; we hung to him until he had run us out of sight of the ship for fully half an hour; then we hauled as near to him as we could, and cut the line, not daring to get any farther from the ship; as it was, we did not get on board before dark. It was the greatest ride I ever had, except one; we got fast to a black-fish, I think in the Indian Ocean; they were playing around the ship, and we had been pulling for them for an hour, but they saw us, and would go down when we got within forty or fifty feet of them; our second mate, who was a very cordy and smart man, got mad and had the boat-steerer take the steering-oar **Lord Howe Is.** and he went into the bow of the boat and overhauled six or eight fathoms of line, stood up on the bow, and just as they rounded to go down, he threw the iron; it struck a very large one just abaft the



fin, and went in just far enough to catch one flue of the iron; we held on to him for full half an hour; it pulled a little sideways, and we ran in a circle of about five hundred feet in diameter, fully fifteen miles an hour; we threw the line in the bow-chocks, and tried to haul up to him, but could not gain an inch until we tired him out; we were not more than fifty rods from the ship, and all hands were cheering us; the bow of the boat turned the water off like the mold-board of a plow as she headed over, and the water was three or four inches above the gunwale of the boat. We cruised a while on the southern ground and then ran into the Bay of Islands again; stayed two weeks and got fresh provisions, and ran north again. We ran up to Lord Howe's Island<sup>12</sup>; there is no anchorage except under the lee of the island, so we stood off and on, and sent in two boats. The English had taken possession of the island, and leased it to an old army officer; he had three men with him, who constituted all the inhabitants; they had ten or twelve dogs which were trained to catch hogs, of which there were an abundance on the islands. The island is about fifteen miles long, and from two to six wide, shaped something like a knapsack; the middle is narrow and low, and the ends high and wide; one end next to the bay where they landed, is fully two thousand feet high; at one end, a thousand feet overhang the water, and then slants back, and on top looks like a large pumpkin, probably covering an acre in extent. The bay is about two miles wide, and one deep, but there is no passage for ships over the reef into the bay, which is shallow, not more than from two to fifteen feet in depth.

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<sup>12</sup> Small Island about 375 miles east of Australia. Lord Howe Island was discovered in February 1788 by H.M.S *Supply*, commanded by Lieutenant Lidgbird Ball, who was on his way to Norfolk Island with convicts to start a settlement there. One of the mountains on the island is named after him. The island was uninhabited. It was named after an English admiral. First settlement was in 1833 with the island supplying passing ships with food and water.

It came on to blow after we left the ship, and when we started to go on board, it was so rough, we could not get over the reef. We had to go back and stayed two days; the ship was blown off out of sight. The next day we went pig-hunting in two gangs; they did not allow anyone to shoot the pigs. We took a boat, for the gang that I went with, and pulled to the side of the bay next the high bluff; we started the dogs, and for three or four hours, we had a lively time. They used two dogs, one is led, and the other is turned loose; the loose dog will bring the hog to bay, and when we came up with the other dog, we let him loose; they would both jump together, and each one catch an ear and hold the pig; we would run up, cross his legs, and bind them, then take a pole and carry him to the beach, then start for another pig. Both gangs caught about twenty. We got hold of one tough customer; the old dog had run him to bay, and when we came up, we found it was an old boar as savage as a meat axe; he had backed up between two roots of a plank tree; the roots start out about six or eight feet from the ground, and run off as far from the tree, sometimes four and sometimes six of them, and from two to six inches thick; the old dog was worrying him and when the young dog was loosed, he did not wait for the old dog, but darted at the pig, and was ripped open half his length, killing him at once; the boar then made a dash for us, but the old dog would catch him from behind when he started, and the boar would turn; we took to the cabbage palms, and he kept us there for nearly half an hour, when the other gang, hearing our shouts, came up, and the two old dogs caught him by the ears, and we threw him and broke off his tusks, which were fully six inches long; The dogs got after a litter of pigs and caught two; they let the pigs go when they caught them. I remember the man with us told us to run to the top of the hill, and take a pig away from the dog, while he got one away just below; J. Dinsmore and I ran

up, and were somewhat surprised to hear the squeals coming from the top of a tree; it was a magpie mocking the pig below, and would have deceived anyone. Magpies are very plenty, so are wild doves, perriquets, and a great variety of other birds, and they are very tame. I took a little stick with a snare on the end, and caught ten or a dozen perriquets, and lowreys, and got my fingers badly bitten, taking them out of the noose. There were wild goats on the island, but they would not let their dogs run them; they were on the high and rocky parts, and they led the dogs where they could not get back. We saw a number from the look-out back of where they lived on the lowest end of the island; we could see the goats go down the face of the ledge, on the bound; from where we were, the ledge looked all smooth. The next forenoon, we went fishing just inside the reef; we fished from a canoe, and caught ten or twelve what they call salmon, but they did not look like our salmon; they weighed from six to twelve pounds, but were not so deep a fish, and had a larger head than our salmon, but were very nice for all that. They raised sweet corn, pumpkins, squashes, potatoes, and watermelons, and sold to passing vessels; their watermelons were very nice. The doves on the island were red-legged, and undoubtedly came from tame ones like ours; they were very plenty on New Zealand also. The vessel came in sight the next day, and we got off, took sixteen hogs with us, alive, but some of them were rather tough. They put them in log pens after catching them, and the old boars they feed to their dogs.

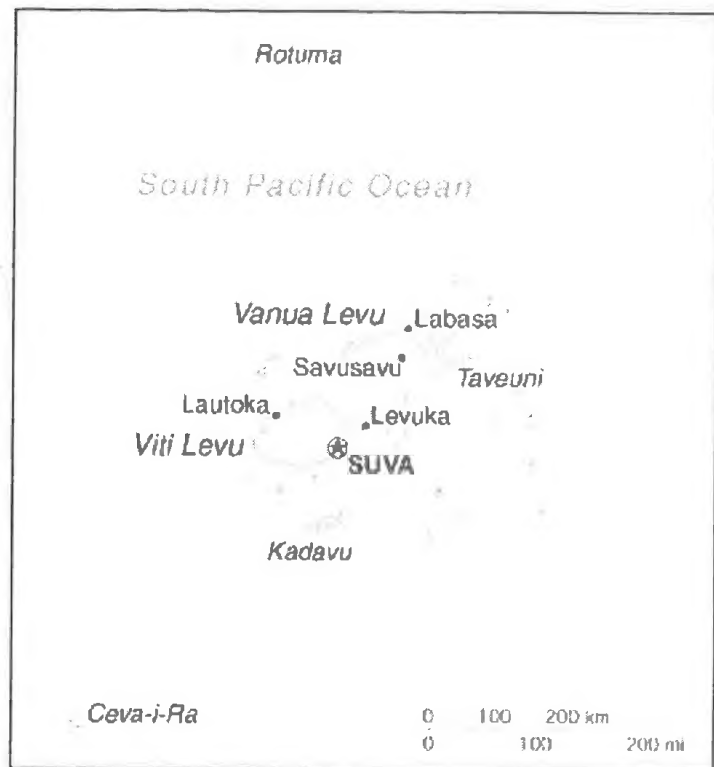
We cruised to the north again, and about the Feejee Islands, and a short time after arriving to the north of them, we struck a very large whale; as luck would have it, the iron set him to spouting blood; when a whale spouts blood, he does not live but a short time, usually not more than half an hour, if he spouts thick; he was an ugly customer, turned

upon the boat and made for it; at the same time we fastened to him with another boat; as he came at the boat with his jaw in the air, like a big harrow, they threw the boat one side with the steering oar; he cut the two oars off at one side of the boat as his jaw came down; he turned again and came as before; they threw the boat the other way when he took the three oars; he turned once more and came at her; this time, having no oars to pull her around with, the mate threw her head around with the steering oar; the two end teeth just struck the boat, taking three streaks, and making a hole as big as a half bushel; he turned again, but so short that he left the boat in the bend, and seeing our boat about one hundred feet away, he came for us; the mate in our boat was up to lance him as he came head at us, and threw the lance into his open mouth; he shut his mouth with a snap; it took off two feet of the end of the lance pole, the lance going into his throat; we were soon out of his way and he turned fin up in a few minutes; we found two harpoons in him, so it was not his first fight; he made ninety-five barrels of oil, and was the largest whale we caught. We had just got him tried out, had been laying to, for two or three days, and were running along with a four knot breeze, the sea smooth, about eleven o'clock at night; I was lying down on deck at the time, when one of the men sang out, "Breakers on the lee bow, hard down with the wheel!" another hollered, "Breakers on the weather bow, hard up with the wheel." Before either of the orders could be obeyed, the vessel struck; we threw the sails aback, but it was no use; when the rollers picked her up, and she came down, it was all we could do to keep our feet; we cleared away the boats for fear the masts would go by the board, and smash them; within five minutes after the warning, we were all hands clear of the ship; we pulled back out of the rollers, and laid by, in sight of the ship until daylight<sup>13</sup>; we then pulled up under her stern, and got

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<sup>13</sup> In the margin is written "wrecked August 9, 1842"

hold of a rope, and got on board; there was about six feet of water, where she lay on a smooth reef of coral, which extended as far as we could see each way, was shaped like an ox-bow, and we had run into the bight<sup>14</sup>; I went to the mast-head, and could see land about forty miles to the south; it was a high island, uninhabited, and no landing on it; the Captain knew from that, where we were; the reef was not laid down on any chart. We got some pork from the harness casks on board, and some hard bread that we had taken out to stow the oil, and a couple of tubs of water from the scuttle; we had to lower the water in pails over the stern, and they would pull up and catch it; we spent two hours or more in getting what we did, as everything was on the move; although the weather was good, a reef at sea is always rough. The



captain got a quadrant, **Fiji Islands 1842**

which was in the top of the binacle, and we had compasses in the boats; we had a consultation, and concluded to run to Cocanut Island, some one hundred and fifty miles, or more to the westward; we had been off this island before, and the natives had pitched off bananas, cocoanuts, etc; we thought we could get green cocoanuts, and fruits here,

<sup>14</sup> a bend or curve (especially in a coastline)

and then run to the island of Rotuma<sup>15</sup>, where the natives were friendly; we did not dare to land on the Feejees, as they had the name of killing and plundering castaways, and I found afterwards that it was true. We started about ten o'clock, in three boats, with a light breeze; we had sails, but took oars also, and pulled by turns until night, when we put our oars on the thwarts, and part of us at a time, lay down, and taking turns steering; the next day it began to blow, and about noon, we had to take in sail, and by night, it was blowing a moderate gale; we lashed a line from one boat to another, about one hundred feet apart, made a drogue from pieces of sails, and two or three oars lashed together, threw them overboard from the head boat, giving them about fifty feet of line; this kept us from drifting off so far, and held us head to the wind; it blew so through the night, that it kept one man bailing, although the sea did not break over us; the wind picked up the spray, and kept us drenched all the time; our bread was damp before, now it was thoroughly wet; we kept the sail over it, and the water, but it was wet through, and the water got very brackish; it moderated in the morning, and we pulled for the island which was about twenty miles off; we did not hoist sail, as it was rough, and the wind nearly ahead; we got an early start as you may guess, and we pulled with a will for although it was tropical weather, we were pretty well chilled, sitting cramped up so long, and thoroughly wet; we pulled into the outer reef about ten o'clock, the boats being somewhat scattered; our boat (second mate's) and the captain's being near each other, but the first mate's was two miles or so outside; just as we were running through the outside reef, the captain's boat, a quarter of a mile astern, we noticed that the mate's boat had hoisted sail and appeared to be steering to the north; we waited until the captain's boat came up, just

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<sup>15</sup> Rotuma is a volcanic island of approximately 43 sq. kilometers, located at 12 degrees south latitude and 177 degrees east longitude, approximately 465 kilometers north of Fiji.



inside the reef, and had a consultation on what it could mean; we could conceive of nothing except that he was running for Rotuma, the wind being fair, and he having the larger proportion of water in his boat, and knowing that we could get no water on the island where we were going we concluded to let him take his own course if he was going to desert us; he had got four or five miles away by the time we had decided what to do, so we pulled for the same<sup>16</sup> about a mile and a half away; we pulled into within ten or fifteen rods of the shore, the natives waded out and we made them understand that we wanted cocoanuts and bananas; they pitched them off and tried to have us come ashore and we refused; once they started to pull the boat in, but the mate threatened them with a lance, and they let go; we got two or three hundred green cocoanuts for drink, the natives of this island using them for this purpose altogether; we thought with the fruit we had, and our salt pork, we could reach the island of Rotuma, about nine hundred miles distant. We started about two o'clock, and had just got outside the reef, when we saw a sail some ten or twelve miles away; then we surmised the reason for the mate's boat leaving us so suddenly; we made sail and started for her; she was beating up towards the island, and we got on board; she proved to be a whaleman that we had cruised with some months before; we found that the mate's boat had seen the ship steering eastward, had run to cut her off, and when within a few miles, was seen by their lookout, and the ship run up to the boat. We cruised some three months with them; they treated us first rate, and we helped them do their work, there being about fifty of us on board, it made it quite easy; she finally ran into the Bay of Islands with us, and left us on the American consul's hands. We had one of the hardest fights on board, the night we arrived there, that I ever saw; they got a gallon of "chain lightning" on board, and the captain had gone on shore; the dispute

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<sup>16</sup> Presumably means the shore

*London Packet II  
Sampson, master*

started between two boat steerers, and drew in all hands, except three or four of us who did not drink; they kept it up for four hours, and why there was not some of them killed, I never could imagine; it was stopped about midnight, when the captains came on board. The captain sent on shore for the consul; he came off about eight in the morning, called all hands after, and asked the mate who were the ring-leaders; he pointed out two of the men; the consul ordered the officers to seize them up to the rigging; the officers started for the men, when every man caught a handspike, or an iron pole, and made a rush aft; they drove the officers into the cabin, and the consul into his boat, and would have sunk her, if he had not left; they had just got enough over their drunk to be ugly; the consul sang out to the captain to send the men on his hands, on shore, and the best thing he could do, was let all the rest go that wanted to; you never saw such looking men as they were they had not washed themselves since the fight; they were cut and bruised, and all covered with blood, clothes torn, and all in all the worst looking set of men that I ever saw.

We went on shore, and the consul supplied us with one pair of pants, one pound of tobacco, one woolen shirt, one blanket, one bar of soap, and one pair of shoes, for which Uncle Sam, I have no doubt, had to pay 500% on the cost, for the value of the whole outfit was not over four dollars.

Some of us went to work there, others, the consul found ships for; James P. Dinsmore<sup>17</sup> went into the woods for a few days, backing out rails for a Jew: I went to work for the consul for three pounds per month, and the first job was to build a wharf; he put me in charge, and had two other men; it was the first wharf in the bay, and the only

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<sup>17</sup> Mr. Dinsmore is mentioned in George Runels manuscript again on p. 109 and p. 115. He may be the James Dinsmore mentioned in a list of Cambridge historical buildings built in 1870 "Dinsmore Court" named about its builder: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/~Historic/marshbuildings.html>

one a year after; we worked on it for about four weeks, and we had about three and a half feet of water at low tide, and some nine or ten on the full; it was large enough for a coasting schooner to lay to.

I then went back into the mountains about ten miles, pit-sawing lumber; we had to camp out; there were about eighty pair of sawyers in the gang; we cut the trees on the steep hillside, then cross-cut them, took off the bark, parbuckled them into the run, then shot them down, the pit being at the bottom of the run; we cut nothing that was not three feet in diameter, from three to seven feet; I enjoyed myself very well while there, about six weeks, although they were a hard set of men; there were no horses or cattle there; the work had to be all done by manual labor; we baked our bread in the ashes, and had ship's rations of salt beef and pork; we had a narrow creek running from the bay within a few hundred feet of where we were at work; it was a noble growth of timber, only one kind of which we used, although there were plenty of other kinds that looked good; the kind we used was called "Cowrey"; the wood looked like maple, but was soft as white pine, was evergreen and the leaves looked like pine; some of them were of enormous growth, the bodies not more than fifty feet, but immense branches, and some of them when we felled them, would clear half an acre on the steep hillside, breaking down trees two feet through.

We used to shoot wild doves almost every day; they were feeding on the wild fig trees, and were very nice eating. Rum here as everywhere, was the curse; a bottle of rum, or a pound of tobacco was legal tender anywhere. An American had built a saw mill on a stream down the coast about twenty miles; but the pit-sawyers burnt it up before he got it running, and would not let him build again; we had twenty shillings a hundred for getting

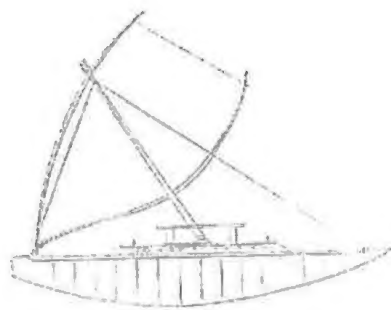
out; we paid one pound each for felling our trees; the price was such that eight dollars a day was not large for a sawyer to make, but they would not work but a few days, and then go on a spree for a week. I went to the bay in six weeks, and made up my mind to get out of that. I shipped in a Scotch brig to run over to Sidney, N.S.W.; it was but a short trip, and I did not like the living; the beef would make good whetstones, and the bread would want to be run through a stone crusher before eating, being made out of bean, oat, and wheat flour mixed. I shipped in an American brig. (Gambia<sup>18</sup>), that had just arrived from Salem; I went on board, as she wanted eight or ten men; she was going trading among the islands, and was selling her cargo so as to start in about two weeks; she had an assorted cargo, consisting of furniture, spirits, shoes, tobacco, etc.; and was smuggling about half of it on shore; we succeeded in smuggling nearly twenty tons of tobacco, and fifty boxes of shoes; the brig was small, only one hundred and fifty tons register, flat-bottomed, drawing only seven feet of water when loaded and a very good sailor. We were known to be smuggling, by the custom-house officer, but he could not catch us at it; before we intended to leave, they gave us twelve hours to get away in, or they would seize the vessel; we left in a hurry, having several tons of tobacco left on board; we took our old course north again for the Feejee group; after about three week's run, we sighted the islands and ran boldly through an opening in the reef, and steered among the islands, those having us in charge, have spent years there; when it came night, we anchored, and the next day ran into Rewa. The chief's canoe came off, and there were a lot of presents made to him; we went on shore and spent four or five days backward and forward from the ship to the shore. The town laid up the river some two miles, and the river continued

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<sup>18</sup> There are several Internet references to the Gambia which was around in the Indian Ocean, Sydney, Hawaii etc. One reference is from a newspaper in Sydney making reference to the Gambia putting into port, the other is reference to a letter posted 1856 from the Gambia; <http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/primidtreaty.html>. The Gambia also was used as a sealing ship and in 1859 under Capt Middlebrooks for the discovery of Midway Atoll (near Hawaiian Islands)

some eight miles through the sea again near Ambow, where the head king lived, although the Rewa king claimed to be his equal, and they were at war every little while. Almost the whole group was subject to one or the other of these kings; there were a few independent chiefs, but they paid tribute for the sake of peace with the king.

There were several fresh water streams emptying into the river, but its water was salt, and deep enough for their large canoes, some of which were very large, being one hundred feet long or more, and made double, catamaran, that is, the larger canoe to the leeward side, and one about two-thirds as large, on the windward side, placed from six to fifteen feet apart, according to size of canoes, and then decked over with plank for from twenty to forty feet. They shipped the mast about the center of the large canoe, and it is stayed to windward to bow and stern of large canoe, and leans a little to leeward. The mast to a large canoe would be about fifty feet long; the sail was made of matting and with two yards and shaped like a leg of mutton; the yards came together at the lower end; the sail was hoisted from the upper yard, the rope hoisting it, fastened the height of the mast from the lower end, the lower yard hanging loose, with the sheet fast about two-thirds the way from the lower end of the sail. They always kept the smaller canoe to windward and if they got caught aback, over goes the mast, as there is no stay on the leeward side. When they tack ship they unhitch the sail from the bow, and slacking the sheet, carry the lower end of the sail to the other end of the canoe and



fasten, then pull in the sheet, and they are on the other tack; it was done very quickly; the sail is very large for the amount of water displaced by the canoes; the ends of the canoes were alike, and covered back to the deck; there was an opening into the hold of the canoe; one of their largest canoes would be, in their largest part, six feet deep and four feet wide. The canoes were made of pieces got out in almost every shape, and fastened together by sewing with sennate—made from cocoanut fiber braided very nicely, is very strong, and does not rot,—each piece is got out to fit the next, and has a rib in the edge; they made holes through the ribs, and sew through the holes, leaving the outside perfectly smooth and polished; they then lashed beams and knees inside; there is not a nail or pin in a canoe. They were made, and some of them were ornamented at the bows, with nothing but a piece of hoop iron, made into the shape of a plane-iron lashed into the end of a stick, and were like an adze; they formerly burned the trees down and partly shaped them by fire, and then adzed them out with stone or shell adzes; when I was there they had axes. It took a gang of men about a year to make one of their large war canoes, and it was said that they launched them with the bodies of their enemies for rolls. They usually had a house on deck, from six to twelve feet square, covered over and thatched, open on the lee side, but could be opened all around, or closed with mats. They steered them with a broad paddle standing upright down through the deck, one at each end; when they tack, they drop one down, and it is out of the water, and they take the other one.

The canoes sail the best on the wind, or with the wind abeam, and would beat anything that I ever saw sail; with a good wind and all sail set on our brig, they would lay two points nearer to the wind, and go by us as fast as we could go by a ship at anchor; it was sport to see them go in a heavy wind; they would gather out to windward far enough

to just keep the weather canoe in the water, (I have seen it go twenty rods without touching the water). They made good rope out of the cocoanut braid, some as large as four inches, and was full as strong, as manilla, but rough to the hands. I have used it a good deal on board ship, and made while here three or four hundred fathoms for running rigging; we bought the braid from the natives, and you can judge what a job it must have been to braid up enough fiber with the hands for it; the braid was not more than an eighth of an inch thick, by one quarter inch wide; it had to be taken from the cocoanut husk, cleaned and braided; we then used it the same as we would rope yarn.

The small canoes were made with a log for the weather canoe, and had but a small deck. When they got becalmed, they would scull the canoes two or three miles an hour, by means of paddles held upright through the deck, all hands going with a song. They cooked on board, and made quite voyages, several hundred miles, but passing through among the islands, of which there were nearly a hundred inhabited ones; some islands not more than one mile in extent, from that to five hundred miles in circumference. There are two of the largest islands, the larger one called "Beeter Lib", that is, "The Big Land."

When they capsize a canoe, which they sometimes did, it was a job to right it, unless near shore, and then they have hard work; I saw one capsized near the brig when we were at anchor; it took them all of three hours to right it; they took the stays from the mast and floated that; then they fastened three ropes to the large canoe and passed them over the small one; there were about twenty-five men on board, then about one-half of them got on the small canoe, and the other half got hold of the ropes that ran under the canoes; after three or four attempts they succeeded in forcing the small canoe under the large one, the men on the small canoe following, and forcing the small canoe along; this was all

done in the water where it was fifty or sixty feet deep; then all they had to do, was bail out the canoes, hoist the mat, and they were all rigged; the canoe was about sixty feet long; I do not see how they could do it with one of their large canoes, although they will carry one hundred men, but it was very seldom that they got capsized.

When we arrived here, the chief that came off was called Phillips, and he was the only native that had ever been from the islands; he had been to New Zealand once, and was in every way a remarkable man; there were three brothers, Vindover, who was the one that Com. Wilkes' expedition<sup>19</sup> started to bring to the United States and died before arriving here; the other was at Rewa, and was the equal of Phillips; Phillips could talk very good English, French, and Spanish, as well as his own language and Tonga ta bue, of which last-name people, you would find some in about all the South Sea islands, as they were great navigators, fraternized with and were useful to all of them, and many of them were chiefs. Phillips could beat the Captain at checkers, and he thought that he was pretty good, could play chess, or cards with anyone on board, and prided himself that he could shoot a rifle better than any man on the islands; he had a number of rifles that had been presented to him. The second day after we arrived there, I told him I could beat him with the rifle; he said he would bet a whale's tooth that I could not; we threw a cocoanut overboard, and when it got five or six rods away, he fired and hit it; I loaded, fired and hit it, although it was ten or twelve rods off by that time; he loaded and fired again; this time it was fifteen or sixteen rods off; he fired a little under, and did not hit it; I fired and hit it a second time, although it was twenty rods off, and bobbing around considerably; he said "you are one Med Martyre", -which means butcher-, and I always went by that name

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<sup>19</sup> sic, perhaps he means Exploring Expedition



while at the Islands; he said that it was not fair for the water bobbed it around so, and wanted to go on shore and shoot; I told him I could not go without the Captain's permission; he says, "I get that", went aft to the Captain and said, "I want that butcher to go on shore with me and shoot"; the Captain would refuse him nothing, as the success of the voyage depended on the good will of the chiefs, so we got into his canoe and went about a mile to a beach; just back there were some lemon trees; we took a lemon and tied it against the body of a tree, and went back about ten rods; I told him that it was not far enough, that the little boys at home would hit it with an arrow; I wanted to get him excited; he said that I could not hit it; I told him that I could cut the stem off; I told him we would fire his distance, and then I would choose the distance; he fired and cut a piece out of the side of the lemon; I fired, cut the stem out, and let it drop to the ground; we then went back about twenty rods, I fired and split the lemon all to pieces; he fired, and came about two inches from it, fired again, but did not hit, and gave up; he urged me very hard to stay and live with him, but I did not feel inclined; I held the position of carpenter and armorer on board, and used to do all repairing of muskets, fixing the locks, etc., which the natives could not do, and they wanted just such a man; many a time the Captain got one hundred yams; a pig that would weigh one hundred, to one hundred and fifty pounds for my fixing a lock that the spring was a little weak, or the notch in the tumbler worn off, that perhaps did not take me more than fifteen minutes; sometimes all the trouble was, they were dirty; they were the old cheap flint-lock; he always made them leave them, and come for them two or three days later, so they did not know how long it took; he did not charge them any more if I put a new breech to them. It was a good chance for me, because I could go on shore at any time almost, and had no night duties; I

had charge of two long eighteen pound guns, and two carronades, which we had on board, and saw that all the arms were in order; we kept an arm chest with muskets, and cutlasses in the main top, and when cruising at any of the islands, two men in the top, when the natives were on board; we did not usually allow more than one canoe at a time, but sometimes there would be a hundred of them; our big guns were always loaded, the big guns with round shot, and the carronades with shrapnel, and every week, I had to draw the charges out, and clean the guns; we had boarding netting triced out every night, and in the worst part of the islands, through the day: the nettings were made from ratling stuff, with about six inch mesh; were triced out to stanchions and went clear around the vessel some seven feet out; no native could get on board with six or eight men with boarding spikes on deck; every man had a loaded musket in his berth, and there was a row of boarding pikes around the mast, and a man to stand over them, when we had anything to fear; there was no necessity where we then were, but in many places there was.

The care of these arms, which was but little with what jobbing we had, and getting water from the shore, was about all I had to do. We had sixteen men on board, and four was the complement from Salem to New Zealand, with one half-breed boy; his father lived on one of the islands; the boy went home with the Captain the voyage before; his father got there from a Nantucket whaleman some twenty-five years before, how I do not know; his name was Whippey<sup>20</sup>; he was a great chief under Ambou and lived at

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<sup>20</sup> Nathaniel Philbrick *Sea of Glory* p. 197 writes "When Wilkes arrived in Fiji, the most prominent of these white men was former Nantucketer named David Whippy. Whippy had been living in Fiji for eighteen years and had several native wives. When he paddled up to the Vincennes soon after the squadron's arrival at Ovalau, Whippy was accompanied by one of his many children. Despite having begun his career in Fiji as a musket-toting mercenary Whippy had gained a well-deserved reputation for reliability-not a common trait among the beachcombers of the Pacific." He served as liaison between the big chief Tanoa, who may be the King of Mudwater, George Runels refers to. The son of this chief was named Seru who was known as well as his father for his violence and brutality.

Overlau<sup>21</sup>, where all the white men lived except one who was called Charlie. Charlie had been a convict at New Holland, and made his escape to these islands; (was called Cornstock Charlie); he lived at Rewa, and was a very influential chief, having some one hundred and fifty wives. Some of the chiefs had two or three hundred wives, their property consisting largely of women, who do all the farm work, as well as the domestic; I should judge there were two women to one man on the islands; they were constantly at war on some parts of the islands, and never took men prisoners, but killed all of them; they took the women prisoners, so they were really slaves, not wives, with the exception of six or eight, who were other chief's daughters, and were married when children; they sometimes took children prisoners, and adopted them into the tribe, but not often, and frequently killed men, women, and children, destroying a whole town at once. They lived in towns, wholly, some tribes having but one town, others, a dozen as it may happen, but there was a head chief in each town.

The first white man that was ever on the islands was killed but a few years before we were there; his name was Charlie Savage<sup>22</sup>, and he had lived on the islands since about 1800. He with several others, mutinied on board of a ship, English, I think, killed the officers, and ran her on shore on the islands; they quarreled among themselves about the plunder, and the natives killed all but Savage, who was spared by a chief near Ambou<sup>23</sup>; they had taken several guns from the ship, and a large amount of ammunition; from all

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<sup>21</sup> Probably Ovalau

<sup>22</sup> Per Nathaniel Philbrick's *Sea of Glory*. Penguin Books: New York 2003 p. 197 In 1808, Fiji underwent another radical change with the arrival of a Swedish sailor appropriately named Charlie Savage. Along with some shipwrecked pals and a large supply of firearms, Savage and his cohorts introduced a more technologically advanced kind of killing to the islands, eventually hiring themselves out to Naulivou, the chief of a tiny island of Bau, just off the southeastern shore of Viti Levu. Naulivou used his new found advantage to consolidate his position as the most powerful ruler in Fiji. In just five years, Savage's brutal arrogance caught up with him, and he was killed and eaten at Vanua Levu. But his disturbing legacy lived on, with a succession of sailors serving as what became known as the chief "tame white men."

<sup>23</sup> This may be Bau

accounts, Savage was a remarkable shot; the natives were superstitious, and his remarkable skill soon gave him great power, and brought his chief to the highest influence of any on the islands. It was said that when chasing canoes, he would shoot away their halyards, and drop their sail, and they would be at the mercy of his canoe. I saw his skull, which was used as a drinking cup by the King of Mudwater<sup>24</sup>, who had once been the most powerful king on the islands, but owing to Savage, had been driven inland on the Mudwater coast which was near where we were wrecked. This Mudwater king was a noble savage, and still had pluck when we were there. Savage was trapped and killed by this Mudwater king, but Ambou got to be all powerful over more than one hundred tribes, and was a very shrewd man, and with education would have made his mark in any country; this was the young king, named Serv<sup>25</sup>, son of the old king who was still alive, and whom we call "Old Snuffy", as he was always snuffling; he had been one of the most savage of all the savages on the islands, was very brave and cunning; all the first white men and firearms, being in his control, he had outstripped all others.

Some years later, I saw an account of this young Whippy in Harper's, also the portraits of Philipps, and others; I learned from that, that Phillipps was dead.

After staying at Rewa for a few days, we sailed around to Overlau, where the white men lived, some six or eight of them, the chief of Ambou came over; we had a long pow-wow; he was offish, because we had gone to Rewa first, but three or four kegs of powder, five or six muskets, and two or three pigs of lead mollified him, and after a few

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<sup>24</sup> This may be the chief called Tanoa referred to in Charles Wilkes logs of this 1838 expedition. At the time George Runels was writing this narrative Capt. Wilkes was being tried for excessive brutality on the American Exploring Expedition of 1838-1841 and his exploits would have been well publicized.

<sup>25</sup> Philbrick calls the son of Tanoa, Seru. Both father and son shared a reputation of brutality and violence as well as cannibalism.

days, he gave his consent to our fishing and he sent one of his chiefs with us. We laid here for several days; it was a very pretty little place, the village being situated in a grove, and near by, there was a spring of water coming down from the high land in the rear, and a very nice bathing pool where the water comes in a fall of some ten feet over a ledge into a pool, which is some twenty feet across. There is quite a number of the islands in the group, which are evidently of volcanic origin, or some other except coral, but the large part are of coral formation, and formed around the others; the coral islands are all of moderate height, say from five to one hundred feet above the water, while others attain a height of from one hundred to one thousand feet, I should judge, and the higher portions, precipitous ledges, and rough broken ground; some of the towns were on these ledges where they could be easily defended, and were almost inaccessible in their mode of warfare; when they were taken, it was usually by treachery.

There was an abundance of fruits and vegetables of their kinds, on all the islands, and under any system of cultivation, the group would support several millions of people. The climate is the best and healthiest that I ever saw; there is always a light breeze off the land during the night; I do not think the thermometer would go below sixty-five in the night, or above eighty-five in the daytime: there is one drawback, however; they are subject to hurricanes, although they are local in extent, some of the islands not getting any to do much damage, for twenty years, or more; there is scarcely a season but that some of the islands catch it; the greatest damage it does to the natives; is the blowing down of cocoanut trees; where an island is stripped of these, it is irreparable for a number of years, the cocoanut being to them what the potato is to Ireland. Where the cocoanut tree grows in profusion one can live, if there is nothing else, have must of the necessaries

of life, and some of the luxuries; it is food, drink, raiment, shelter, light, and fire, and all without destroying the tree; besides they use the timber for their houses, make their fishing nets from the husks, also their ropes and lashings for all purposes; they use the shells for bottles for oil and water, for drinking cups, and bailers for their boats; make butter from the meat of the nut and oil also; from the sap of the tree they make beer and vinegar, and since the white man came among them augadent, (as do Portuguese and others); it is a kind of whiskey; there are other uses that they put the different parts to; the limbs that die off every year from the under side, make excellent torches and light wood.

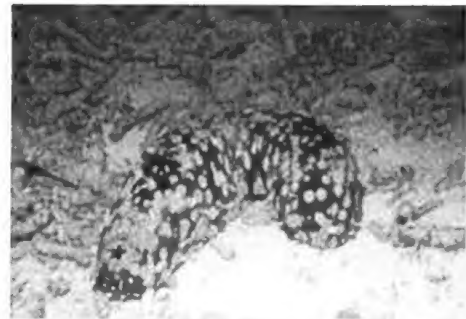
They had for vegetables the yam and tarrow, also arrow-root, and I have no doubt but that all kinds of vines would grow if introduced; of fruits there were all the usual topical kinds, and some that I have never seen elsewhere, but presume they grew on other islands. The yams grew to greater proportions than anywhere else that I saw; they were mostly of the long kind, and some three feet long and six inches through were not uncommon, and they were frequently four feet, or over long; you could cord them up as you would wood; we used to buy them by the hundred; a whale's tooth was their standard, as our dollar is; one thousand yams for a whale's tooth; in some places three whale's teeth for a musket, or ten hogs for a musket; we frequently got vermilion for our small change; we used to do it up in papers about the size of homeopathic prescriptions, what you could take up on the point of a knife; they used it to paint themselves with, and it showed up to advantage on their black skins.

They are as big dandies in their way as an English eye glass swell. Everything in the way of trade is by way of barter. Powder is sold by the bottle; a junk bottle of powder would buy a woman, or three hogs. I made three thousand plane-irons from heavy iron

hoops, just cut them off six inches long, scarfed off one end and ground them on a grindstone, could get twenty-five yams for one iron. Tobacco leaf, scissors, axes, bullets, and knives were the other principal articles of trade. While we lay at Overlau, in lowering a box of axes over the side, it slipped and went overboard. We were anchored in fourteen fathoms (84 feet); we dropped a lead line over where they fell, and sent on shore for a native diver. He came off and wanted to know what we would give him to get them. They know how to trade and will haggle as much as an Irishwoman. You do not want to offer them more than half what you are willing to give. Finally the Captain agreed to give him one of the axes, so he got out of his canoe into the water, wet his head and neck for a minute then took a cod line with a noose in his hand and a stone in his arms about as big as my head. The man in the canoe pulled the lead line up straight and he put one arm around it, and curled himself up into a heap, and sank like a stone, without making a motion; he was gone what seemed to us ten minutes, but was probably not more than two, when he came up like a rocket and swam to his canoe. We pulled up on the cod line and fetched the box of axes. They are as much at home in the water about as they are on the land. When they see a shark inside the reefs, the canoes will put for him and when they get near him, into the water they all go. They dive down and some of them will get under him and with picked sticks, and sometimes knives, they strike it into his belly, one after the other and fetch him to the top of the water, and soon dispatch him. They do not fear him any more than a butcher would fear a pig in his pen. I have seen them kill one ten feet long; but there is one kind about the mouth of fresh water rivers that they are afraid of, they are called maneaters, and the natives will not go into the waters where one has been seen for a month. At Rewa just before we were there, one had

taken a woman, when she had waded in, washing some mats in not more than three feet of water. We caught two while laying there, the only ones that I ever saw caught. We put a pig's entrails on a shark hook and hung it over the stern, and within an hour, hooked one, and hauled him up under the stern, with his head just out of the water, and he drowned in an hour or so. I think you could have dropped a barrel into his mouth without touching the sides of it. He was not more than nine feet long, but was built differently from any shark I ever saw, being shaped more like a catfish, an enormous head and shoulders, and tapering back from there. We caught another that night, and we took the livers into tubs, and set them in the sun when we got more than a barrel of oil from the two livers. The natives gave us two large hogs for the carcasses; they prefer them to pork, and go on the principle of eating their enemies. The women and children from the smallest up are like ducks in the water, and I never heard of one getting drowned. There was a woman captured near Overlau, by a tribe living on an island twelve miles off, and carried to that island, the two tribes being at war; she took to the water that night and swam back to Ovalon<sup>26</sup>. The white men in Ovalon said there was but one place between the islands where they could touch bottom, and that was not more than half an acre in extent, and the water four feet deep, and she said she did not hit that.

We hired a little schooner of ten tons owned by the white men here, and three of the white men, two to go in the brig, and the other in the schooner. The schooner went to the south, down around Kantavo, while the brig went north onto the Mudwater coast, both to collect Beche-de-Mer and



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<sup>26</sup> Unclear here if author means Ovalon or Overlau



tortoise shell. Beche-de-mer is a kind of fish<sup>27</sup> which grows on the coral reefs; it varies when stretched out from six to eighteen inches long, and from one and a half to two and a half inches through, it stretches out, and draws up like an angle worm; it has a very small mouth and feeds on very small shell fish. It lies in the holes on the reef, and only comes out nights. They catch them by diving down on moonlight nights, and catch a few by torchlight. They will go into a hole on the reef that is not more than two inches across, and then contract themselves in a ball four inches through, if there is space inside, so they cannot be caught in the daylight; they are never in shallow water, and usually fish in from two to eight fathoms of water, and in the full of the moon as deep as sixty feet; they cannot see them except on moonlight nights, or with torches, and they have not the appliances for that. The way it is done is: the vessel after enlisting the king, goes to some of the towns subject to him with one of his head chiefs on board, who commands or recommends them to fish for the ship; it amounts to about the same thing whether he recommends or commands. The Captain has to make a present to the chief men of the town, and then haggle a day or so on the price he is going to pay for cutting wood, how much a basket for fish, and the size of the basket, and how much to the chief for building the house, and for men to work. Until all that is settled there is nothing done and it usually takes from two days to a week. Sometimes they have to settle difficulties between two tribes, and both fish at once. The next thing is a hostage on board, who is one of the chiefs of the town and he is held for the good behavior of the tribe, and for the safety of our own men on shore, where there are always from one to three. They commence the house at once when the preliminaries are settled; it usually takes about three days to complete it. They are built from seventy-five feet to one hundred and

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<sup>27</sup> Actually Beche-de-mer is a type of sea cucumber that is eaten in Asia and treasured by traders in this era.

twenty-five feet long, according to the prospect of fish, and about fifteen feet wide, and twenty feet high. They dig a trench the whole length of the house, about three feet deep, and five feet wide, a little on one side of the middle; about five feet above the ground they make a battar over the fire; it is made of small bamboo poles laid an inch or so apart and above this are two others about three feet apart. They start the men cutting wood so that by the time the house is done, they will have a good pile of wood cut and the wood-cutting continues as long as they fish; then they set two large arch kettles on an arch built of stone near one end of the house outside. The kettles will hold about five barrels each. After taking a lot of casks on shore, ladles and skimmers similar to a whaleman, they are then ready for fishing, and if the moon is right, they go at it, the whole tribe, men, women, and children. You will see them putting off in their canoes from three o'clock to dark, each going where he thinks there are the most fish, some going as much as twenty miles, others not more than two or three, and back in the morning, or the latter part of the night, as the moon happens to be. They fish as long as they can, and when they commence to fish take in sail and commence to dive, and when there are five or six in a canoe, there will be half of them in the water all the time. A man will dive down three or four times when the water is deep, and then get into the canoe, and another takes his place and so keep it up, each keeping their fish separate, and when they bring them in, they are measured in the basket and agreed upon; they take their pay in what ever they choose at the price fixed; some want a musket or an axe; they have theirs measured out and wait until they get enough to come to it; then they take it. The fish are then split with a gash along the belly, thrown into the kettles, where they are boiled about three hours; then they are skimmed out and spread out on the lower battar and a fire built in the trench

underneath; they are kept here until the next day, when they are changed to the next higher battar, and so on to the next, and when they have laid for a day there, they are usually dry, and well smoked; they are then sorted and bagged and carried on board, and stowed away; they are, by this time, not more than four inches long and from one inch to one and a half inches through, and when cut open, look much like a piece of raw India rubber, and are almost as hard; they were used exclusively by the Chinese, who made soup of them, and esteemed them as a great luxury.

After leaving Overlau, we ran to Mudwater, and started fishing. The first place we ran into, we had quite a time getting started; two of the tribes were at war, and we had to negotiate a truce before we could do anything; one of the tribes lived up a river, the other on the coast; we sent our chief, whose name was France, (he got his name by killing a French captain, which I will notice further on,) on shore to have the chiefs come aboard, and they agreed to come the next day; the chief from up the river came in a canoe without outriggers, the first that I had seen; they used paddles and had no sail; the canoe was about eighty feet long, being as long as our brig; they had about forty men on board, and each one used his paddle with as much precision as a man-of-war's man; they came down from the mouth of the river like an arrow, the chief seated in the stern, and every man with his spear and club, the chief only having a gun beside him; the other chief had arrived before him, with about twenty men; we had our boarding netting triced out, with three men in the top, and every man where he could handle his gun or pike at a moment's notice; we let the chiefs with five of their head men come on board, keeping the canoes, one on one side of the brig, and one on the other. France started the pow-wow by making a bowl of Angona, a native liquor made from the Kava root, (description further on); after

drinking all around, he stated that we wanted to make peace between them, and have them fish for us; how much better it would be for them, what amount of trade they could get, and all the advantages to be gained by making peace. The coast chief, who had reaped the most advantage from the war so far, got up and made quite a speech, finally saying that he would make peace, then sat down on his haunches like the others; then the mountain chief arose; he was physically the most powerful man that I ever saw; he stood about six feet in height, and I should judge, would weigh nearly three hundred pounds, without being the least fat or puffy; his arms and legs were of immense size, and looked like nothing but bunches of cords; I never saw such a model before nor since; he stood two or three seconds and uttered, after glaring around upon the other chiefs, but two words, "Single Sarrow", which means "No, never," and with such emphasis, that no one could mistake their meaning, and all his men arose; France then stepped forward, and told them that if they did not fish, it would displease the King, and he would make war on them; the mountain chief said that he did not fear the king, and had no king over him, and he should do no man's bidding; he would like to fish for the Papalangee, (white man), but he would not make peace; the Captain then made him some presents and he promised to come again the next day, and he would let us know whether he would consent to a truce in order to fish; he then left, we keeping the other chief until he had got into the river, as we had agreed there should be no treachery, if they came on board; they came back the next day, and consented to a truce for six weeks, which we afterwards got extended to four weeks more; one tribe fished below the river and the other above, each agreeing not to go beyond certain points with their canoes, if they did, they were liable to be killed; they both observed the compact, we having a chief on board from each tribe, as hostage.

Our house was built on the coast chief's ground, he furnishing wood, etc., and the others delivering their fish at a point and we carrying them to the house. Before leaving there, we had made arrangements for fishing about forty miles farther down, at a small island, I do not remember the name, and when we finished with the two tribes, we went there. France told me that the chief, who was such a Hercules, was the only chief on the islands, who had sprung from the "Kisses", (poor men); all the chiefs were hereditary sovereigns, but this one had risen by brute strength, and was very much feared.

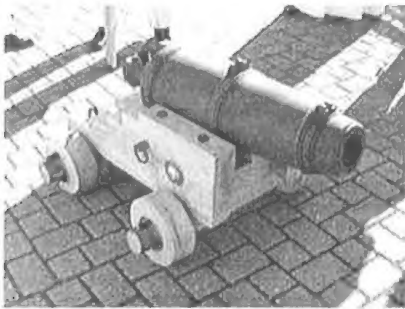
France was the war chief of Ambou, and a great chief, being the son of the chief of Vema, an old man, and at that time the only convert of the missionaries, and the other chiefs all said that he still ate "long pig" on the sly. Long pig was the name they gave to the human body, and "pig endena," or "real pig" to the hog. France was then in the prime of life, I should say about forty years of age and as brave a native as I ever saw; most of their greatest conquests were gained by treachery, and they dare not trust one another to any great extent. We learned a few months later, that the Hercules, I call him, had nearly destroyed the other tribe, and the King of Ambou thought he was getting too strong, and when we left the islands, France was going with a hundred war canoes to cripple him.

We commenced fishing at the small island, and while laying there, I experienced my first hurricane; I had heard of them but we had escaped so far; when on the Mudwater coast, I saw the wreck of a brig from Salem, which our Captain was in, when mate under Captain Archer, who was a noted trader to the islands at one time, and whom I afterwards shipped under, at Calcutta. The wreck lay up in the woods, fully fifty feet above high water, having dragged her anchor some twelve miles, and going up among the trees.

*Glide*

Captain Wallace told us the story; it was some twenty years before and the natives were even more savage then when I was there, as they had not been visited by men-of-war, and were not so much afraid of the whites; all wrecks were considered common plunder by the natives, whether of the whites or blacks. The captain said that after the hurricane, the natives came to the vessel, then high and dry; the vessel had lost all her boats, but the crew had hurried themselves in getting up netting; the vessel had gone on shore stern foremost, owing to her anchors dragging, and her bows were out of the bushes about fifty feet; they cut the bushes away from around the stern, and armed themselves; they also had cannon on board, one of which was raised up to sweep the stern, and the other they could sweep the beach with from the bow, which was inclined toward the water, and listed to one side; the masts had been cut away to try and keep her from going on shore; the natives when they discovered her first, came and pretended to be friendly; their village was about four miles above; the crew would not let any of them come on board; the natives soon gathered in numbers, and began to threaten, but did not dare to try to take the brig, as they thought it was only a question of time; the crew had plenty of provisions on board, and strengthened their position by barricading with casks, etc; there were eighteen men on board, and the natives made no attack for a fortnight, but brought fruit which they traded, only letting two or three come near the vessel at a time; one day, the natives brought a hog, and four of them brought it along-side; three or four of the crew were hauling it up with a rope, the rail being about eight feet above the sand on the low side of the bow, the rest being from that to twelve feet above the ground; the natives let fly a shower of spears and arrows, from the bushes, where more than a hundred had concealed themselves, and then made a rush for the vessel, and nothing saved them but

the boarding netting, which was triced up so the only place the natives could get over was where they were hoisting the pig; the crew had never been off their guard, knowing them as they did; two or three of the crew were wounded slightly, but they escaped without any



serious injury; the boarding pikes were immediately brought into play by part of the crew, others used the muskets, and the captain ran for the slow match, which was kept hanging in the galley, went to the forward gun, which was a twelve pound carronade, trained it on them and fired; he said that such a howling he never heard, and in one minute, there was not a living native to be seen, except those that were so badly wounded, that they could not run; he said that within one minute after the attack, it was all over, and at least thirty or forty killed or wounded natives, the carronades being loaded with scraps of iron, and spikes bundled together; there was not another native seen within gunshot of the boat while they were there. They had a schooner of thirty tons as tender, up the coast; she heard from the natives that the brig was ashore, and the tender came down after they had been on shore five or six weeks; they took all of value that the schooner could carry, out of the brig, and destroyed the rest.

We lay at a small island where we were fishing, about two weeks, when one morning it felt very oppressive, and the captain said he feared a hurricane. We were laying inside the outer reef about two miles, and we hauled around into a little bay in the inner reef, and not more than three hundred feet from shore. The bay was not more than five hundred feet across, and entirely encircled by the inner reef, except fifty or sixty feet; there were about twenty feet of water in the bay, and good holding ground; it commenced

blowing in puffs about ten o'clock; we had sent down our topmasts, and taken in our jib-boom, when it struck us with the force of an avalanche; we had paid out all the cable we dared, it tailed us so near the shore; we dropped another anchor with ten fathoms of chain and then the captain ordered down the fore-yard; I went into the slings to unshackle them, and to bend on the halyards; I could hang on to the rigging only by keeping in the weather side of it; the captain was on deck almost directly under me, hallooing through a speaking-trumpet to me; I could see that he was speaking to me, but I could not hear the least sound of his voice; we succeeded in getting the yard down, and rode out the gale in safety. A person could not stand on deck without holding on to something; the wind would pick the water up, and drench everything, from bow to stern; there was no chance for a particle of sea where we lay, and that saved us from breaking our hold. The wind blew from every point of the compass within the four hours that it lasted, and it tapered off into an ordinary gale, which last most of the next day. It was an awe-inspiring sight to look around upon during the prevalence of the hurricane; the wind struck us from the off shore, and when it came down, everything was of a hazy white; it picked the tops of the sea up, and forming it into a spray, left the sea almost a dead level; on the shore, which was flat for one quarter of a mile back. and most of it an open cocoanut grove, the trees were up-rooted in every direction, and you could not count the falling ones, they went so fast; some would stand it for a few minutes bent to an angle of forty-five degrees or so, and then topple over. Almost all the houses were blown down, our beche-de-mer house among the rest; our house would have been burned, but our men, seeing the hurricane coming put out the fire by shoveling dirt on it. We could see the natives running for the rough ground, where they got shelter the best they could behind rocks or



ridges. It looked desolate when it cleared off the next day, and stopped our fishing at that place, as it destroyed or damaged most of their canoes, almost all their houses, and more than three quarters of all the cocoanut trees on the island, and greatly damaged all their fruit, sugar-cane, etc. A hurricane must always almost make a famine for a year or two, and twenty years are required for new cocoanut trees to come to full bearing.

The man from Overlau who was on shore, said the natives were hoping the brig would come on shore; if she had, they would have plundered her, but they would have had a hard fight first, for we all knew that "our fat was in the fire," if they took us; I mean that literally.

We took our things on board and ran down about fifty miles southeast; here they were not damaged by the hurricane; had only a heavy gale. We left a fishing party here, and then ran back to Overlau, to see to our tender, and so up to Kantavo. Here is where Lieutenant Henry<sup>28</sup> of the U.S. Man-of-War Vincennes was killed two or three years before, together with three or four of the boat's crew; the natives were so severely punished, that they were likely to remember it for a long time. Commodore Wilkes' exploring expedition, comprising the sloops of war, Vincennes and Boston, and a tender, the name of which I do not remember, she was a schooner, I think, were laying here. It was but a small island but contained a large town; it was separated from the large island by a shoal-water passage about a mile across, and at low water, one could wade most of the way across. The boat of the Vincennes, under Lieut. Henry, when on shore with the ship's butcher for pork; they had intercourse with the natives, and everything seemed

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<sup>28</sup> Midshipman Wilkes Henry was part of a crew searching for food on the island of Malolo when he was killed by the Fiji's July 24, 1840. He was Commodore Wilke's nephew.

friendly; they had no suspicions that the natives would dare attack the boat with three men-of-war in the immediate vicinity; they had gone up to the village which was a hundred yards or so, from where they landed, when some of the men had a slight difficulty with some of the natives; the crew were coming down to the boat, when they were attacked by a large force of natives, and Lieut. Henry and three or four of the men were killed; the others ran for the boat, and would have all been killed, but for the boat keepers, who, when they saw there was trouble, pushed the boat off, and the men rushed into the water, and got off, leaving the killed in the hands of the natives; the next day the Vincennes and Boston hauled in, with one half mile of the town; they put a howitzer into the launch, and the tender hauled around between the island, and the main, as far as she could, and the launch hauled in on the other side; then they manned their boats with two hundred seamen and marines; when all was ready, the two sloops of war opened with their broadsides on the town, and at the same time the boats started for the shore. The town was situated on a slight rise, and inclosed outside with a light palisade, and then with a wall about six feet high; the guns had opened a way through the defences, and the shot had crashed through the houses before the force had reached the land; as soon as they landed, they sent a shower of rockets into the town, and in a minute, it was all in flames; the natives, panic-stricken, rushed for their canoes which were inside, toward the main land; some got into the canoes, others took to the water, men, women, and children; the sailors rushed through the town, and followed them to the beach firing at them as they were crossing to the other side; at the same time, the tender and launch raked them from both ways with their guns; it was high water, so many of them had to swim for it; a few of the canoes got across, but the most of them were shattered to pieces, and the water was

alive with people. One of the men living at Overlau, who was on the tender, told me that the natives said afterward, that there were more than six hundred killed; the town was entirely destroyed. When I was on the island, although the town was rebuilt, when you met a native, he stood one side until you passed, bent half to the ground, as a mark of respect. The poor man never stood erect in the presence of a chief, and when he met one, always bent his body forward, and stood until he passed and he bent in proportion to the power of the chief.

The expedition after took the chief Vindova<sup>29</sup> and started to bring him to this country, proposing to return him after showing him the country, and how useless for them to war on the white men; he died on the passage home; and the natives supposed the white men killed him. At this same island two years before, they took an American brig, and killed all but four on board; these got into the cabin, and with a double-barreled shot gun, shot the chief through the companion-way; the rest of the natives took to the water, the white men regained the brig, took her to Overlau, and afterwards ran her to New Zealand. I had the account of it from the man who was on board as pilot, and the same one that piloted the United States expedition.

We found that our tender had not accomplished much; the brig remained here and I went on board of the tender, and we ran down to Bewer, which was the island where France, our hostage, lived; he went with me, as he was no use here, these tribes being under the Rewa King. We ran down in one day and went on shore. It is an island about two miles in diameter, and a hundred feet or so above the water in the highest part; it is

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<sup>29</sup> From Nathaniel Philbrick's *Sea of Glory* p. 201 Veidovi was implicated in the murders of an American beche-de-mer trader Charles Doggett in 1834. Veidovi was captured by the Exploring Expedition, instead of being executed, he would allegedly to be returned to Fiji "a better man and with the Knowledge, that to kill a white person was the very worst thing a Feegee man could do."

about two or three miles from Ambou, where the king lived, and about as far from the large island, "Beter Lib".

France put me in a house by myself, a spirit chief's house, where no poor man was allowed to enter without permission from the chief; all strangers were lodged here, or in the chief's house for safety, although I felt as safe with France as I would at home; some time in the night, France rushed into the house, and sang out, "Martyre", in great excitement; it startled me considerably; I jumped up and asked what was the matter; he said to come out, Ambou was all on fire; I went to the door, and it was as light as day; we could look all over Ambou, which is a small island, less than a mile in diameter, and with the exception of narrow streets, was almost wholly covered with houses; there was quite a breeze, and there were more than fifty houses burning when I went out; all the natives of Rewa were rushing out and laughing in great glee; no one offered to go and help, and all seemed to think it was great fun; there were probably more than a thousand houses on the island and each one was as combustible as a haystack; within ten minutes of the time I first saw it, the whole island was ablaze, and was so hot they had to take to the water; they waded out from the shore, and got their canoes off, everyone with a handful of their valuables; it was a thrilling sight from where we stood; we could see almost every person about as plainly as if we had been among them, it was so light; there was no danger to life, as they could wade across to the main island; in less than two hours, there was not a house on the island; it was as clean as though there had never been a person on it; three months afterwards, when I was there, you would not have known there had ever been a fire there; the king sent to all the tribes, and everyone had to contribute men and material; in six weeks every house was complete and occupied.

While we were on the tender, I saw something of their religious belief, which must have originated from some of the old Israelitish customs; the chief of one of the islands wanted to go off to the schooner, which lay outside of the reef; it was quite rough, and in trying to cross the reef, they got swamped; they tried it the second time, with the same result; they said the Spirit was angry. They got a pig, which was the only domestic animal on the island, and brought him down to the beach; the spirit chief swung a cocoanut around his head several times, then knocked him on the head with a sacred club; they then cooked him, and burnt some of the poorer parts; the spirit chiefs eat the best parts, giving the rest to the people; then they started again, and went all right, the spirit being appeased, or the wind having gone down, which amounted to the same thing. Their spirit chiefs were a good deal like the shaking dervishes of India, and some of their performances were really wonderful; they had houses built much higher than the common one and in them were held all their councils and meetings for consultation among the chiefs; hanging up around the houses were the sacred clubs, and other weapons, and three or four angona or liquor bowls; some of these were as much as two and a half feet across, standing on three legs; the bowls were made from iron wood, about as dark as mahogany; they were made across the grain, hollowed out from four to six inches deep, the legs made from the same piece; they were polished inside, and shaped thus<sup>30</sup>:

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<sup>30</sup> There is no drawing nor photo in the typed Internet with an example of Kava drinking. S



When they held a pow-wow, the head men get together and usually get six or eight young men, or boys, and set them to chewing the Kava root; first they wash out their mouths, then open them to show that they are clean, then each takes a piece of the root, and commences to chew, adding piece after piece, until they have as much as their mouth will hold, which is no small amount; when it is thoroughly masticated, they take it out, and place it in the bowl, and so keep it up until they have enough for their purpose, then one pours water with it, until the head man says enough; then it is stirred up for a few minutes, then strained through the fiber of the cocoanut until all the pulp is extracted; then they all sit around the bowl, the head chief takes the drinking cup, which usually was the half of a cocoanut shell high polished, and drinks a cup, then passes it around to the next highest, and so on, each one as he drinks making some remark, and all singing out, "Enedena", long drawn out, which means, "Very good." Their bowl sometimes has to be replenished, and they usually occupy three or four hours, some of them getting pretty boozy before they get through, and all are very happy, it having something of the effect of opium, but not so injurious, and was generally pronounced healthy; at any rate I hardly saw a sick person while I was on the island, and they frequently buried their old men alive, when they got so old they could not do anything, or get around; they requested it, and their children took them at their word and did it, whether they repented or not.

After a week or ten days, we went back to the brig, broke up fishing at Kantave, and then sent the tender down to where we left our other fishing party; we went to the eastward to pick up tortoise shell; we stopped off many islands, and bought what they brought on board, going to the Galapagoa, but making no landings, standing off and on, and trading for shell; we then ran back to the Bay of Islands in New Zealand to get rid of

the balance of our tobacco, which we did not succeed in smuggling when there before. They had changed their customs regulations since we were there before; instead of a custom-house boat that watched the vessel from the shore, they put an officer on board; now, we ostensibly put in there for supplies, and had no tobacco, or cargo of any kind on our manifest; we had our tobacco just under the hatches and covered with beche-de-mer. The officer that came on board was a Scotchman, very fond of singing Burn's songs: the way we managed to get our tobacco on shore was this; the Captain would go on shore, and when he had sold his tobacco to a trader, (the stores all faced the water), he would hoist the signal agreed upon in the store door; the mate would then ask the officer into the cabin, give him a glass of grog, then get him to singing; all except two of the crew would then get into the companion-way; the two would then give the signal, and would have two or three kegs of tobacco ready, the boat would come off from the shore, quietly take the tobacco onboard, and go back on shore; in a short time, all would come on deck again; in this way we got all our tobacco on shore without paying any duty, and in fact without their knowing that we had any on board.

After remaining in port a few days, we sailed for the Fijis again, and ran into Rewa; there I saw the most disgusting sight I ever saw; it was the remains of a feast they had been indulging in for three days; there were probably three thousand men of different tribes, all subject to the Rewa chief; a few days before, they had captured a town some fifty miles from there, on Viter Lib, had killed men, women and children, brought them to Rewa, and had them cooked; the remains consisting of all parts of the bodies, were strewn around for half a mile on the river bank below the town, it was in a beautiful grove above the bank, where they had their ovens.

They cooked all meats whole, whether long pig, pig endena or tortoise; their mode of cooking was this; they scraped a hole in the sand or ground, some ten feet across, and two feet deep, paved it with round cobbles, much like our old street paving; they then built a large fire in the pit thus formed, rolled cobble stones into and around it; they kept the fire going for an hour or two; they then pull all the loose stones out, take bushes and sweep out the pit, then covered the bottom over with green banana leaves, several thicknesses thick; they then put in whatever they had to cook, say a hog; if it is a large one they rolled a hot stone in leaves, and put it inside of the hog; then cover the hog with a number of thicknesses of leaves, then roll the hot stones over, forming an arch, then put more leaves over the stones, cover the whole with about six inches of sand, or earth, and cook from two to four hours, according to the size of the animal. In preparing the animal, they knock it in the head, sear off the bristles, then take water and a piece of split bamboo which they used for a knife, scrape and wash them, and take out the entrails; they never bleed their meat; cooked in this way it was really very nice; we frequently got them to cook our pigs for us, the meat being very juicy and nice.

Whenever they cooked meat, it was always a general feast, never a family affair; there was another thing, the women never eat long pig, and were apparently as much averse to it as white people. The natives had many curious customs among them, Taboo being one of them: a man that handled the dead that died naturally, would be tabooed for two moons from handling what they eat, not even feeding himself, and for certain things they were tabooed from eating any meat; there was a perpetual taboo of the women from eating long pig and a large portion of the time from eating real pig; I think this custom must have originated, from the scarcity of animal food, and the women being the servile



class, had to take the "short corners." There was hardly a person but what was tabooed from something; every little while a poor man was tabooed from killing a great chief, even in war, and they had a law, which under certain relationships, prevented one chief from killing another, and one could claim any article the other had; they called this "vassue"; as an instance Phillips was a "vassue" of Ambau, and he told me that when Rewa and Ambau were at war, he got out of powder, went to Ambau, went into Serue's house and demanded powder, which they gave him, and no one dared to kill him, because he was "vassue" of Ambau, and Serue would have killed anyone who molested him; this, I think, was a policy kept up by the chiefs for their own protection, as it was seldom that a head chief was killed. Their rule was an absolute monarchy in every sense, the chiefs were hereditary, and their word law in every case; when a chief said to kill that man, it was not questioned, but executed, and with dispatch.

They were a muscular race, the men being large and well-formed, I think the largest I ever saw, taking them altogether. I used to have a good many scuffles with France, and trials of strength, he was quick, and had great strength for a minute, but could not hold out with me; the first minute, all I tried to do was on the defensive, then exert myself and I could conquer him every time; he could not see how I could do it; he was the largest and most powerful, and there were but few of the natives that he could not handle. He was the war chief of Ambau, and took his name from killing the Captain of a French vessel, when he was about eighteen years old; he told me how it was. A French bark, I think it was, came there; it was manned by a large crew, and carried six brass guns; I think it was a private exploring party; they ran in near Rewa where his father was head chief; they lay there for several days, letting the natives come on board without much

restraint; his father planned to capture her; they told the Captain that there was a good place about a mile around from where they lay, to get good water, and if he would send his boat with casks and men enough to tow them off, they would fill them for him, but as the water was shoal, he would want a large boat's crew; the Captain said he would send in the morning, and get some; early in the morning France's father sent him, with two large canoes, on board the vessel, with fruit and yams as presents to the Captain; they got on board without any trouble, and the Captain sent the long boat on shore with twelve or fourteen men, for the water, leaving about twenty on board; the vessel was intending to sail in the afternoon, and the men were at work fixing things up about the deck; there were about forty or fifty natives on board, and in the canoes along-side; France, who kept a lookout for the boat, when he saw them land, called the Captain's attention to the boat by saying, "What is the matter with the boat, I think they have capsized"; the captain took his glass, stepped to the rail, and put up his glass to look, when France, standing a little behind him, struck him on the head with his war club; that was the signal for the other natives, who were scattered about, each one near some of the men, and in an instant, they were all knocked in the head, not one escaping; the boat with the first officer, when they landed, were served the same by those on shore; they pillaged the vessel, pressed two of the white men from Overlau to run her, with the natives; they ran her around for nearly a month, when they got her aground near Ambau<sup>31</sup>, near the mouth of the river that goes to Rewa; her hull lay there when I was there, and two of the brass guns were in front of the chief's house at Ambou.

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<sup>31</sup> The text is sometimes Ambou and sometimes Ambau

The French government sent a man-o'-war here to punish them; they bombarded Ambou, and one or two other towns, knocking down some of the houses, but not killing many of the natives; they dared not land, as the vessel had to lay a mile and a half off Ambou, and could not cover a landing party.

France said he had to do as he was ordered, but was very sorry that he did it, and almost cried when he told me of it. He and I became very good friends, and he showed me many favors; he was very anxious that I should stop with him when the vessel left. We had quite an adventure together soon after our return to the island when we had laid at Rewa a day or two, we ran around to Overlau and to Rewa, took France on board again, and ran down to where we had left our fishing party. We found that they had moved farther down the coast, owing to a tribe breaking up their fishing one night by killing some of the fishermen, the others not daring to fish afterwards. When we arrived at this last place, they were doing very well, but there was some discontent; we took their hostage on board our vessel, settled with the Overlau men, and sent the tender to Overlau. About the fourth night after they left, in the evening we heard a loud hallooing from shore, and a moment later a musket ball whistled over us; we instantly manned a whale boat, and started for the shore with eight armed men, and France; France said, "Watch the hostage", who had started out on the bow-sprit; he was getting outside the boarding-nettings, and was very scared, when I ordered him on board; we had a man named Burns, who weighed about two hundred twenty-five pounds, who caught up a handspike at the same time I ordered the hostage on deck, and would have brained him, if it had not been for me; I had a boarding spike, and told Burns that I would see to the hostage; I told Burns to clear away the guns, and have them ready if the natives made an attack; the boat

came off in a few minutes, with the two men that were on shore. The trouble arose from one of the natives from the town bringing the leg of a woman which they had cooked, saying the chief had sent it to the white men; he was boiling beche-de-mer, and was so mad to think they would send a leg to a white man, that he took a bailer of hot water out of the kettle, and threw it on the native; it made a commotion at once, the natives threatened to kill him, and the white men took their guns and ran for the beach, and fired a shot over the vessel to attract our attention; if it had not been for the hostage on board, the white men would undoubtedly have been killed; they belonged to Overlau, and said the leg was sent to them on purpose to insult them. It broke up our fishing, and we could not persuade them to fish any more. As we were intending to stop only two or three weeks more, we concluded to pick up, and run to Rewa and then leave the islands.

We were then only about forty miles from where we lost the whaling barque; I, with France and four others ran down to the reef; I saw her anchor and chains, and old gun laying in about six feet of water, but no other sign of the old vessel; France told me that the natives were on board her, and that she did not go to pieces for two or three months.

The incident in which France and five others were concerned, was a little exciting; we anchored near a town, and the chief told France that a canoe with two white men on board, had been captured by the natives of a town about six miles from there; that they had killed one of the white men and carried the other in their canoe to their town; that they had carried him by our vessel the night before; it was dark when the chief told France about it; France was greatly excited, went to the Captain, and wanted him to send a boat up to the town; the Captain said that he would not send anyone, but if anyone would volunteer, they might have a boat; France came to me; I told him that I would go

with him: Burns and two others of the crew, and the two men from Overlau also went; the Overlau men had no doubt that the white men were from Overlau, as the Eastern islands had no white men, but some of the Overlau men went there to pick up tortoise shell; we started as soon as we could get ready, each man with a cutlass and gun, with plenty of ammunition; it was about nine o'clock, when we got started, and we got to the landing place about half past ten; it was about a mile from there to the town, by path, although not more than half that distance in a straight line; we pulled our boat up a short distance above the landing, and left one man in charge; in case any firing was heard, he was to launch it at once, and keep it afloat, and in readiness; France knew the way, the tribe being subject to Ambou, but trying to override its authority. We wound up a very steep hill through the bushes, no man making any noise; we were fully a half hour reaching the vicinity of the town; it was situated on a plateau, I should judge some five hundred feet about the sea, was surrounded on the sides by cliffs and ledges, was practically inaccessible from these sides; on the side toward the water, was a palisade of logs, about seven feet high, with a strong gate; France told us to stop, and he walked up boldly to the gate, (there was a sentinel on the inside), announced who he was, saying he was an ambassador from Ambou, and demanded admittance, telling the man to make no alarm, if he did, he would incur the displeasure of Ambou; the man opened the gate, and bent nearly to the ground; France told the Overlau man to stand to the gate, and see that there was no obstruction to our retreat; he knew that the chief was wilful, and having the present power in his hands, might not cow easily. The town was as still as death, all being asleep, excepting those on guard; France asked the guard where the Pappalangee was; he replied, "In the Chief's house," which was not more than twenty rods off; France

walked up to the door, and moved the mat one side; I and the rest following immediately behind, each with a drawn cutlass in hand; I carried a bull's-eye dark lantern on my belt, and when we stepped in, I pulled back the slide; the room was divided by curtains of tappa (cloth) into three parts; they are hung about six feet high on a braided cord; France stepped up to the first curtain, and struck it down with his club; before us was a white man lying on his back, with his arms and legs bound so that he could not move; we made signs for him not to speak; I cut his lashings, and he sat up, and in a few minutes, he got up; although he had been securely bound, the lashings were not tight enough to stop circulation; France stepped up to the next curtain, struck it down, and called the chief by name; he was sound asleep, but was on his feet in an instant; France asked him what he had been doing, and why he had the white man a prisoner; he took in the situation at once, and seeing that he was cornered, tried to excuse it off; said that he was keeping the white man from being killed; that another tribe had captured him, and killed the other man, that he had persuaded them to give this one up to him, and he was going to return him to Overlau; France heard him for a minute, and then in a voice that made him tremble, told him he should rue the day he defied the authority of Ambou; that he could then, with the men that he had with him, destroy everyone of them, but he should spare them until he consulted Ambou, but their day would speedily come; he told him that if he moved from his house when we left him, that he would kill him at once. I gave my cutlass to the liberated man and we left the house, France stopping for a moment until we got outside, then following; we quickly passed the gate, and took up our march for the boat, which we were not many minutes in reaching, as we did not linger by the way; we

did not feel really safe until we were a hundred feet from shore; we all drew a long breath, and began to question the man we had saved; he was called English Charlie, and lived at Overlau about two years; the man who was with him when they were captured, was a Portuguese, and killed at the time, and he was no doubt eaten, as they stopped one day on an island with another tribe; it had been five days since his capture; they had unbound him day times on the canoe, and bound him nights; he had no doubt but that they had intended to make a feast of him, and had been ready for the least show of escape; you can believe that he was a pleased man. He had lost the three first fingers of the left hand, very curiously; they had captured a shark, one day on the ship he was in, they had cut him open, and taken a part of his skin off, then started to throw him overboard; they had got him on the rail, when Charlie said, "He ought to have prayers said over him," and was saying "Now we commit your body to the deep, and put his hand near his head, when the shark snapped at him, caught his hand across the middle, and took it overboard with him; he took from the thumb to the little finger, as clean as a surgeon could have taken it with a knife.

France was good as his word when we arrived at Ambou; they sent an expedition, and destroyed the town, killing the chief, and putting the tribe under the chief six miles below; the one who told us of the white man's capture. It was about two or three o'clock, when we arrived at the brig, but there was no sleep for us that night. The next morning, we sailed past the town about a mile off; I had permission to fire one of the long eighteen pounders into the town, and as we went past, I sent a round shot crashing among the houses; we did not stop, but I gave them one more shot; we could see them running in all directions, but there was probably no harm done, except make some holes through some

houses; we had no further trouble, and arrived at Rewa in three or four days; there we left France with a liberal amount of presents, and I can say on my part, with a good deal of regret. I had a great many pleasant times with him; he almost always wanted me to go on shore with him; I have roamed around on almost all of the islands with him, and always felt as safe as I should on our own soil; sometimes we were away from the ship three or four days, and I was always well treated. We spent two or three weeks at Overlau, in storing cargo, and putting things to rights. Four of the men that shipped at New Zealand wanted to be discharged here, and were paid off in trade, and left at Overlau; we still had a large crew.

When all was ready, we hoisted sail, and steered to the northward and westward on our way to Manilla, on the island of Luzon, one of the Philippine Islands. We had pleasant weather generally, and but few incidents worth naming; one I will relate; we were near the island of New Guinea, one morning. It was nearly calm, when we saw a water-spout several miles away, and during the next two hours, we saw at least fifty; there would be quite a puff of wind for a few minutes, and then almost a calm; I was at the wheel, when one formed about a mile to leeward of us, and was coming directly toward us; our Captain was great excited, more so than I ever saw him before; we were going about four miles an hour, and had all sail set; the Captain instantly called hands to take in sail, and sang out, "Haul down the jib, take in the top-gallant sail, lower the topsails, clew up foresail"; all of the orders given one after the other, as fast as he could speak them, and the spout then not more than a thousand feet away, and coming at the rate of ten or fifteen miles an hour; Burns, the man I have spoken of, start first forward, than aft as the next order came, and finally seeing the Captain was scared, turned to him



as cool as though there was no danger at hand, says "Is there anything else you will have, Captain?" By this time the spout was up to us, and the best thing had been done that could have been, that was let everything alone; we had drawn ahead just far enough to let it pass under our stern. It was a magnificent sight; there were three or four acres of water whirling and dashing to a common center, which, fifty feet from the water, was twenty-five feet across, and at three hundred feet, not more than six or eight feet, then gradually widening, until five or six hundred feet, it would cover an acre; one of them broke about half a mile astern of us, and we could see that a ship would stand no chance with one, as it would strip everything off her, and if it broke, as it undoubtedly would, would swamp them at once; after a while we got a steady breeze, and ran on our course, but we saw several more that day.

We passed northwest across the line, sighting many islands on our way, but having no communication with them, until we reached the Caroline Islands<sup>32</sup>; when about three miles from one of them, a canoe came off, as it was nearly calm, and we got some bananas and yams from them; we saw six or eight more coming off, but as the breeze sprang up, we left them astern, and was very glad to do it, as they had a very bad reputation; a few days after, we entered the strait of Bernadino; the straits are not more than thirty or forty miles long, and from three to fifteen miles wide, as near as I can recollect. We coasted along for two or three days, not more than ten miles, and sometimes not more than three miles from shore; we saw quite a number of vessels going one way or the other, which showed us we were nearing a civilized part; we soon ran into a magnificent bay, through a very narrow passage; the bay is, I should judge, not more

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<sup>32</sup> Archipelago, c.830 sq mi (2,150 sq km), W Pacific, just north of the equator. The largest islands are Palau (Belau), Yap Chuuk (Truk), Pohnpei (Ponape), and Kosrae.

than ten miles across, and was nothing but a roadstead, as I found to my cost, before I got away.

The next day, after the health and custom officers came on board, we hauled into the mouth of the river, and up to the town. The old town was situated on a point of land, the bay on one side, and the river on the other; the river side was walled in to the height of thirty or forty feet, and a low wall carried out into the bay some hundreds of feet; there was a lighthouse on this wall, and guns mounted along its length; the side of the town towards the bay was a fort running to the beach, and above the town, there was a deep moat running from the river to the sea, with a draw-bridge, the water in the moat being twelve or fifteen feet deep; the moat side of the town was a fort also; there were wall guns mounted on all sides of the town, and the walls were very thick; the draw-bridge and gate of the town were closed at sundown, and not opened until sunrise in the morning; the custom house gate which was on the river side, was where all business had to be conducted with vessels; on the opposite side of the river was Santa Cruz, the new town where everybody lived, except a few of the old Spanish Dons; all the houses in the old town were built of stone, with battering walls, and no windows on the narrow streets, except small latticed ones in the upper story; the beams supporting the roof, on account of earthquakes, crossed each other at the corners, and projected outside; the roofs were tiled, and there was a large heavy gate which opened into the court yard, and was the only means of entrance or exit; the gate was closed at night, and was strong enough for a fortification, which it really was, every man's house being his castle; the town was so built as protection against the natives, who were Malays, and considered very treacherous, but I think not much more so than the Spaniard, their conquerors. The new

town was quite a lively place, and all the business was done there. All ship's boats had to be on board before eight o'clock at night, when a gun was fired from the fort. The patrols were at the corners of almost every street with a drawn cutlass, but one soon learns how to get around all that in a Spanish place; a real goes a great way with them, and blinds almost any eyes. We got here about the eighteen of December,<sup>33</sup> and commenced to discharge our cargo at once, in to a large store house, the Captain making sale of the beche-de-mer to a Chinese house that he previously traded with, on the next day after our arrival; the Chinese population being quite large, this was the headquarters of the beche-de-mer trade; this was just after the opium War, and Canton was the only Chinese port open to foreigners.<sup>34</sup> I was sent on shore by the Captain, to see to the weighing and taking account of the same, and slept in the house to keep the Chinese from stealing. The beche-de-mer was sorted by Chinamen into different grades, some kinds being much higher priced than others; the white was cheapest; the price ranged from thirty-four to eighty dollars per Spanish Picule<sup>35</sup>, (I believe about one hundred thirty-four pounds.) Our cargo of about one thousand picules, averaged about sixty dollars per picule, and the voyage netted the owners at least one thousand per cent on their venture. The captain, who had a percent in addition to his pay, made about twenty thousand dollars for his part. The cargo carried out and sold and smuggled into New Zealand paid all the trade required, and the expenses of the voyage. They had two tons of shells beside the beche-de-mer, and they bought a cargo of hemp, coffee, and sugar to take home; I do not know

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<sup>33</sup> 1842/43

<sup>34</sup> Opium Wars, 1839–42 and 1856–60, two wars between China and Western countries. The first was between Great Britain and China. Early in the 19th cent., British merchants began smuggling opium into China in order to balance their purchases of tea for export to Britain. The Chinese responded by destroying British opium in Canton but eventually Britain with modern arms force China to sign a treaty in 1842 opening more ports to British trade.

<sup>35</sup> 1 picule=133 lbs)

what they made on that. The Captain had orders to sell the brig at Manilla, if he could get five thousand dollars for her, but he could not sell her, so bought a cargo.

We got all our cargo out on the twenty-second, and as we had sprung our main mast, the Captain bought another, and we were to have it alongside on the twenty-third, which was our Sunday, (the Sunday at Manilla coming on the twenty-fourth, one day later;) vessels kept which Sunday they chose, but could do no business on their Sunday, and the Captain left word for us to hoist in, and step the mast on their Sunday. The mate called all hands in the morning to wash decks. Which we did; he then ordered us to make fast, and haul in our new mast; I being carpenter of the ship, it was my duty to bend on to the mast alongside, and step it; I refused, as did all the others; the mate said that it was the Captain's orders, and he had nothing to do but give them, but he did not blame us for not doing it. About ten o'clock, the Captain seeing from the shore that the mast was not going up, came on board to see what the reason was; the mate told him that the men refused to take it in, because it was Sunday; he asked who did, and the mate told him that I did, and the men backed me up; he sang out for all hands to come aft, and said to me, "Runels, hitch on to that mast"; I told him I should not on that day, and as I had shipped at New Zealand for a port or home, I would be discharged, as did an Englishman by the name of Evans, who had shipped with me; he said that he would give us our discharge on the next day, and told the others to go to work on the mast, but they all refused; he told them that he could not discharge them, and that they should catch it before they got home.

Evans and I took a boat and went on shore; he went on board of an English ship "Ellen" laying a short distance below us: the Captain wanted a couple of men, and he

shipped on board, and tried to get me a chance; he had sailed with the Captain before, and the Captain told him that he would take me if I could get a recommendation from my Captain; Evans did not tell him that we had had a trouble; there was no other English or American vessel in Port, except English men-of-war. The next day being Christmas, there was nothing doing, and would not be until after the first of January, the custom house being closed and everybody celebrating. We saw the Captain on the street on Monday morning; he told us that he could not discharge us, as the laws of the port forbade it, and if he did, they would put us in jail; that in case of sickness, the Consul would take us on his hands, but he would have to pay three months' advance wages, which he should not do; he said to me "Runels, go on board, and attend to your duties as you always have, and I will overlook what has passed, and give you a mate's berth for another voyage, in a new vessel which I shall have for the next voyage;" I told him that I had shipped or had agreed to, on board the English ship Ellen, laying below us, and that Evans had shipped also; he said that he did not care for Evans, and would rather he would go than not, that he had always liked me, wanted me to stick by him, and that he would do well by me; I told him that after leaving him as I did, the crew would all laugh at me, if I went back, and I thought as I had agreed to go on the English ship, I ought to go; that I was sorry that we had had the trouble, and perhaps I had done wrong in not taking in the mast when ordered; that we had been working hard every day since reaching port, and were disappointed in not having a chance to go on shore on Sunday, as was usual in port; he said he should not have asked it, only he wanted to get the vessel all fixed up during the holidays, so that he could be ready to take in a cargo as soon as the custom house was open; all this time, Evans had been talking very saucily to the Captain; I took the

Captain's part, and told Evans that he ought to be ashamed of himself to use such language, and that I was ashamed to be in his company. Just as we arrived at the consul's office I said to the Captain, "I suppose you would not give me a recommendation after the trouble we had;" he said but for the day before, he could give me a recommendation for any position, and would gladly, but under the circumstances, he could not; I told him that it did not matter, I thought perhaps that if I wanted to get a position in an American ship some time, it might be useful, that I did not blame him, although I had done the work that he would have had to pay a man much more for, if he had shipped for it, that I had done many things that did not belong to me to do, but I did not know as I had any right to expect it; the last of this conversation was in the consul's office. Evans was discharged, he having a certificate that he belonged to the ship Ellen, but I not having one, and being an American, was liable to be put in jail if found on shore, not belonging to any ship, as they were very strict there. The Captain, after talking some time, went over to a desk, and went to writing; he came back across the office, and handed me a paper, which was a recommendation as an able seaman, and then said to me, "Now Runels, you had better go on board, and this shall be the last said or thought about this matter." Evens, who was standing beside me, read the paper at the same time I did, burst out laughing, turned to the Captain, and said, "You d. o. f., he would have had to go back on board, if you had not given him this, the Captain of the Ellen would not have take him without it; you, to let a boy soft-soap you out of that, are a bigger fool than I thought," and very much other abusive language; The consul could but laugh, but Captain Wallas was mad clear through; I got my discharge, and we went on board the Ellen, but we were not to go on duty until January second. We went on shore, got some masks and dominoes, (hired

them for one dollar each), then got a boat, and went up the river about twenty miles, I should think, to a lake, where almost everybody went then, masquerading; there was dancing, shows, and processions; I should think there were five hundred boats; each boat had a circular cloth covering, about eight feet long, something like an emigrant wagon, only not so high, although it was high enough to sit under; it was fitted with mattresses, and they all slept on board. We had a boatman with us, who pulled and poled the boat up the river; we had a gay time of it, and go back the first day of January. We saw the Captain up there, but he did not know us, and we did not wish him to. I think that I never saw any people who seemed to enjoy themselves, as well, and leave all cares behind them; the crowd of twenty thousand or more, that was congregated there, the Governor of the island, and all the dignitaries seemed to be on the same level for the time, and in point of morality there was but little difference, and none of them too high in the scale.

We went on board the *Ellen* on the night of the second, commenced taking cargo on the third, and dropped down the river into the roadstead, expecting to get clearance papers, and sail for Singapore the next day; there were about a dozen vessels lying in the roadstead, two men-of-war among them; it was hazy when we went down the river, and the next morning it looked decidedly bad; the monsoons, which usually blow very steady, came in gusts, then a lull; all the vessels began to send down their top-gallant masts and yard and house their topmasts, and clear their anchors, for everything indicated a typhoon, which is nothing more than less than a hurricane; it came on before they could get ready to receive it; it struck us about ten in the morning, and lasted until night, although the heaviest of it was over by four in the afternoon; of all the vessels in the roadstead, not one escaped damage, and two were wrecked; we had three anchors out, but

dragged on shore stern first broke our rudder off, and started a leak in the quarter; it was low water, and we hauled off in the morning; we ran up the river, where we had to lay about a week to repair our rudder, and calk the quarter; we escaped better than most of them, even the men-of-war, and when we left, two ships lay broadside on the beach. The second day after, Sir Admiral Parks fleet came in with two frigates, with topmasts down, and towing a French frigate which was dismasted; they were about sixty miles out, and said it was the hardest blow, they had ever experienced. The fleet was the one that had been engaged in the Chinese war, called the opium war, which had closed a short time before. The people of Manilla were mostly a mixture of the Malay and Spanish, although there were some pure Castilian, and some pure Malay; the Spanish, in all their colonies, unlike the Anglo-Saxon, mix and intermarry with the native, white with black, without losing caste. The Malays are a bright mahogany color, with regular features, and jet-black hair, rather small of stature, although of average height, and a very supple figure; I think the ladies of Manilla as a class, have the handsomest forms and features of any people that I ever saw. In the interior, where the plantations were, they were of the native race, and it was for protection from them, that the city was so strongly fortified, as they had had several insurrections.

We took casks to the sugarhouse at Manilla, and they filled them with molasses for fifty cents each; we could get sugar in jars of fifty or sixty pounds for three cents per pound; I bought a jar for my own use. I also bought, when ashore with Chinese, about fifty Manilla hats, nice ones, for fifty cents each: I sold them at Calcutta for one dollar each.



As soon as we had repaired, we sailed for Singapore; we made the run in two weeks or so; we laid there but two days, took out some cargo, and some in; the agent there had orders for us to run up to Canton, which we did; we lay down at the mouth of the river, and I went to the factories, which were outside the city, and several miles up the river. The port was open, and outsiders were by treaty allowed inside the walls, but Englishmen were not looked upon very favorably, and we did not venture inside; in fact, I was but a few hours there; they were not factories as we use the term; it was only the trading and store houses of foreign nations outside the city; there was quite a large collection of native houses, as it, at that time, was where all the trade with China was carried on it being the only port where foreigners were allowed to trade.

The English fleet went up the river silencing the forts, which if manned with English or American forces, all the navies of the world, at that time, could not have taken, but would have been destroyed if they had undertaken it; it was said that many of the guns, if not all, were bedded into the stone work of the forts, and strapped down, so that the gunners had to expose themselves to load them; and the guns were of no use, only where a vessel ran before them; the forts, of which there were quite a number on the river, were situated high above the river, and close to the bank, where the river was not more than half a mile wide, and still, where they mounted more than a hundred guns, were silenced by two frigates; all they had to do was to anchor outside the range of the guns, and take their time; their muskets were but little better, being the old matchlock, something like our old flintlock, only with an open pan, and a hammer holding a piece of lighted fuse instead of flint, and were of a very bungling make.

We lay in the roads, under an island, which was a very good harbor; all the vessels took their cargoes from lighters. It was the greatest place for beggars that I ever saw; there was a large class there that lived in boats; whole families are born, and die in them; they sold fruit and vegetables to the ships, begged and stole for a living, and nothing went amiss with them; vessels had to keep a watch over everything when they were aboard, and watch them nights, or they would steal the copper off from the vessel's bottom. I saw one old woman come on board, and skim the grease off the cook's swill bucket and eat it; they would come around the vessels, and sing out, what sounded like, "come shave," drawn out in a very dismal tone; it meant, "give me something," as near as I could make out. We got some very fine oranges here.

They had gallows boats on the river, with a gallows erected all the time; it was merely an upright timber, with a cross piece extending out about six feet on each side; they hanged for very small offences, the Mandarin, or head one on the river, being the judge and jury combined, and the whole court thrown in; we stayed here but a few days, and ran back to Singapore, where we lay three or four days. Singapore lays at the mouth of the straits of Singapore; it is but a short strait leading from the China Sea, to the Straits of Malacca. Here we found some fifty or a hundred Chinese junks, many of them of a very large size; they made one voyage from China each year, coming down with the north-east monsoons, which is a wind that blows from the N.E. for about six months, and return with south-west monsoons, which blow for about six months from the S.W.; it is in the months of the changes of the monsoons, that they get the typhoon. The junk cannot sail with the wind much, if any, forward of the beam; they cannot beat at all, and were a curious looking vessel, but a pretty good sea boat, they say. Imagine a very blunt bow

with a large eye on each side; as the Chinamen say "How see, no eye?" and have them on all their boats; the bows rise, in a large junk, thirty or forty feet out of the water, the stern even higher, while amidships, it would not be more than twelve or fifteen feet; ranging from amidships aft, about three stories high, were little rooms, as all the sailors had some occupation, shoe-makers, tailors, etc. A large junk would carry several hundred for a crew, and as they are at sea not more than two months in the year, they must have something else to do. The reason they had so large a crew, was on account of their large sail, which is made of matting or grass cloth and as the Chinese say, "once mast, once sail;" the sails were very large; they had two, three or four masts, as it may be, no bowsprit, and the masts did not set in line in the center, but alternated each side of the center; the masts were a single stick sixty or eighty feet long above the deck, with no blocks, or purchase for hoisting sail, excepting an "Irishman's purchase," which is a rope yarn over a spike. On top of the mast was a kind of half moon with holes through it, which the ropes pass through, and then over the circle; they hoisted their immense sails by main strength, but as they sail with the monsoons, and it is about always pleasant weather, when the monsoons get fairly settled to blowing, they had but little handling of sails. I had the curiosity to measure the anchor of one junk that lay close to us; it was fastened to a coir cable, which was eight inches in diameter; the anchor which was of wood filled with stones, was about this size; the shank, it had no stock, was about twenty-five feet long, and eighteen inches square, of some hard wood; the flukes were four in number, about eight feet long and same size square as the shank; about three feet from the points, there were braces running to the shank some eight or ten feet from its lower end, with cross bars from one fluke to the other, and the entire space between braces,

flukes, and shank, filled in with stones securely fastened; I judged the whole thing would weigh six or eight tons; this had to be handled by hand.

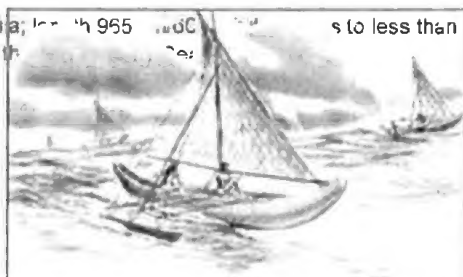
While we lay here, I went down to Pineapple Island, and got a boatload of the best pineapples I ever saw; we paid one or two cents apiece for them, and they were very large. It was very hot while we lay here; it would rain for an hour, or so, and then it would be hot enough to boil eggs in the sun. The city lays, I think, one degree south of the line, and as it is landlocked, it cuts off the wind a good deal; it is stifling hot at times.

The city is on a rise of ground, sloping gradually from the water, is very prettily situated, and I think, had about thirty thousand inhabitants, a thousand or so English, to whom it belonged, and the rest of almost every nationality. It was a place of a great deal of trade, as it was situated on the direct route from Eastern to Western Asia, and Europe; it all passed its door, and being the nearest port to China, it commanded a great share of the trade; it took a good share of the Spice Islands also. There was but one port open in China, and none in Japan.

We left here, and entered the straits of Malacca<sup>36</sup>, then the most dangerous piece of water in the world, on account of pirates; there were five or six men-of-war, mostly English, cruising there all the time, but still unable to protect the merchant vessels, as there was scarcely a month that there was not a vessel captured by the pirates, the crew murdered, and the vessel plundered and burned. The straits are narrow, so that a vessel could be seen from either shore, and full of bays and creeks where the proas<sup>37</sup> could run

<sup>36</sup> Strait of Malacca, Channel between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula; 38 km/24 mi wide. It carries all shipping between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.

<sup>37</sup> A double hulled boat, see picture used in Micronesia.



out and back, before a man-of-war could overhaul them; they made their attacks mostly in the night, so they could get out of sight before daylight; they had sails, and long sweeps propelled by from ten to fifty men; woe betide any vessel, unless heavily manned and armed, if becalmed while passing through.

We left in the morning with a light breeze which carried us along through the day, until nine in the evening, when it died away; about eleven, two or three proas came in sight, it being a bright night; they came up within half a mile of us and circled around us, and within an hour after, there were six or eight in sight, and we could hear them talk; I should judge there were fifty men to a boat, as they could be seen quite plainly with a glass; everything was kept dark on our boat, and every man at his post, although we had no hopes, if we were attacked, there was no noise on board, except a boatswain's whistle sounded low occasionally; they evidently did not know what to make of us, as some of the men-of-war had gone through disguised as merchantmen, been attacked and "they caught a Tartar", killing several hundred of them as there was no quarter shown on either side; they hung around us until about two o'clock, working gradually nearer; when a breeze sprang up, they started to close in on us as we stood along through the straits, we had nothing to fear with a breeze, as they did all their work by boarding; when we were satisfied that the breeze was going to hold, we opened our ports, and fired our two twelve-pound carronades, loaded with shrapnel, at the two nearest boats, with what effect, we could not tell, but there was a great deal of noise, and they all dropped astern; at daylight, there were none to be seen; we spoke a sloop-of-war in the morning, and reported to them; they went to examine the coast, with what success I do not know,

probably none, as it was almost impossible to find them, although they had traced some of them into some of the Malay towns, and destroyed the towns.

We were five days getting through the straits, passing along the island of Sumatra, sometimes one, and sometimes five miles from shore; the scenery was thoroughly tropical, but we did not land, although the breezes laden with refreshing odors were grateful to us, and probably much better for us, than the malaria we should have encountered on shore; we entered the bay of Bengal with a light breeze, which held for two or three days, when it became almost a dead calm, and for six weeks, it was a succession of calms and the faintest kind of a breeze; in that time, we had made about three hundred miles, and had got short of provisions, and water; it was the most trying time that I ever experienced at sea, although we did not really suffer from hunger or thirst, we thought we did; we went on to allowance of water, at first two quarts per day, and then one quart, this last but for a few days; we did not have to work, as the English law did not require it, when on short allowance of water or provisions, only as far as the safety and navigation of the vessel were required. Every man signed articles binding him for the voyage; the articles agree what he shall receive for pay, and specified what provisions he should have daily, for instance he shall receive three pounds of pork, three days in the week, one and one-quarter pounds of salt beef, four days, one pound of hard bread, five days, two pounds of flour per week, one-half pound of peas, one gill of rum, water not limited, coffee or tea twice a day; we were short of meat, not having but two pounds per week, and one-half pound of bread per day, but were given about four pounds of beans, and flour per week.

There were a great number of turtles in sight most of the time, lying asleep in the sun, with their backs out of water; the mate with his boat's crew had tried for several days to catch one, but without success; the vessel was under almost man-of-war discipline, at any rate, the Captain wanted it to be so; he was brought up in the Old East Indian service, entered it as a midshipman, and the Company's ships were under the same code as the men-of-war, in fact, furnished the government with war vessels in the East Indies, and soldiers as well, in fact, their powers were almost unlimited, going so far as to declare war on the petty princes. The first mate, whom the Captain called his First Lieutenant, had a boat's crew that belonged to his boat, and the Captain and crew for his gig; the Captain never spoke to his men, but gave his orders through his officers; he was a little dandy of a man, about forty-five years old, I should think; I told the mate that I thought I could catch some of those turtles, if he would let me have a boat, and some men, and he told the Captain what I said; the Captain said that the Yankees always thought they could do more than anybody else, (Yankee was the name I went by, being the only American on board,) but as it was very desirable to catch the turtle, as we were almost out of meat, and very short of all kinds of provisions, he said that I might try, although he did not have any faith that I would catch any; the mate told me that I could try; I took four men, wound canvas around the oars where they went through the rowlocks, so that they should not make any noise; the second officer was in the boat to steer, as no boat left the ship without an officer; I had never caught a turtle, but knew their ways, and had seen the natives catch them at the Fijis, and at other islands; although they usually caught them in nets, still they caught them in the water, when calm; when we started from the ship there were quite a number of turtles in sight, from half a mile to two miles off; we pulled for

the nearest one, and I gave instructions to the men that when I said pull, they should pull as hard as possible, until I jumped into the water, then they were to hold water, and stand ready to grab the turtle, if I got hold of him; we pulled up quietly towards and behind him; when we got within five or six rods of him, I saw him turn slowly around towards us; I knew that he saw us then, and gave the word to pull hard, as he started to go down; now a turtle can swim as fast as a steamboat can travel, but like them, they cannot start at speed; a man can go down five or six feet under water quicker than they can; I had nothing on except linen pants, and a Guernsey frock; I stood up in the bow, and as the boat came up nearly to the place where the turtle started down, I dove for him, and caught him by the shell, one hand each side, whirled myself on to my back, with the turtle above me; he was not more than five feet under water, when I turned him, which is a very easy matter in the water, and when back down, comes right to the top; I lay on my back, forcing the turtle up as long as I could hold my breath, then let go, and came to the surface; they had got hold of the turtle and were trying to get him into the boat, which is no easy matter; I got hold of the opposite side of the boat, and they got him in, after which I got in; I caught in the neighborhood of a dozen, all this way, except one or two, we got onto without waking, in the course of the next two or three days; they furnished us with all the meat we wanted, in fact, we carried two into Calcutta alive, some three weeks afterwards; they would weigh from one to two hundred pounds, being a large size of the green turtle, the largest fully three feet long; so they found the Yankee of some use, although but a boy, my twenty-first birthday being about this time.

We spoke a vessel soon after catching the turtle; the Captain got a barrel of bread, and a cask of water, giving them a turtle. Soon after, a breeze sprang up, and we soon arrived



at the sand heads, at the mouth of the Hoogley River. Sand Heads is a bar of sand off the mouth of the river, and a long distance from land, although Tiger Island is in sight; this was nothing but a low jungle, but a great place for tiger hunting.

There was a lightship anchored here with a large number of pilots on board; every ship took two pilots, one a branch, the other an assistant; a pilot here had to serve twenty-one years, before he could get a branch commission; it was very dangerous navigation getting up, the tides being very strong at times, and the current out-running sometimes, nine miles per hour, and even steamers, in those days, did not run up, when the ebb tide was on; there were many shifting bars, it was very dangerous getting on to them, and if they got on to one at ebb tide, it was almost sure destruction. We saw many crocodiles while going up, and an immense amount of filth going down with the tide; we were four days getting up to Calcutta, no ships towing up at that time, in fact, tug boats were not much in fashion in those days.

The country as you go up the river is very flat, the bank seeming to be the highest land, and for a long distance up, no habitations; when up within some forty miles, it began to be settled, and about twenty miles below Calcutta was what was called Garden Reach, which was a succession of villages, and gentlemen's places; (Distances are from memory, and may not be accurate.) As we came within a few miles of the city, which was on the right-hand side of the river, going up, there was a large fort, said to be the largest owned by the British Government; it was said of it, that it was designed to mount one thousand guns, but by some miscalculations of the engineers, it only mounted nine

hundred and ninety-nine; I do not vouch for the truth of this. There was quite a town within the fort, which I think was called Fort Williams.<sup>38</sup>

As we reached the lower part of the city, we had to warp up some two miles, out to mooring ground; every vessel's berth was designated by the harbor master; there were no wharfs, and every vessel was moored head and stern; two cables from the bow, and two from the stern, fastened to large buoys, which were held by immense anchors placed by the government; they were arranged along the river bank, about one hundred and fifty feet from shore, in tiers, three or four feet deep; sometimes four vessels fastened to one buoy, but generally but two; the vessel was so fastened that they could always be in the same position, and could not swing with the tide. Sometimes, when vessels were coming in, or going out, they lay in the stream for a day or two, but never for long, as the tide was very strong, and changed very suddenly; at the spring tide, they had what they called "Boreas"; that is, the tide would be running out at the rate, perhaps, of four miles per hour; you will hear the natives sing out "boreas", boreas", and every one of them would put off from shore with his boat, and hang on to the nearest vessel that is moored or anchored, and woe to the boat that does not get away from shore; you look down the river, and you will see a wave coming up the river like a race horse, some four to six feet high, followed by two lesser ones, about a half minute apart; they look like the rollers that come in on a shelving beach after a heavy storm; when it struck the vessels and boats, it made a pretty lively time for a few minutes; I have known the tide to be running out at the rate of four miles per hour, and in from five to ten minutes, rise six or eight feet and run in the other way, at least six miles per hour; boats caught on the shore, are rolled over

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<sup>38</sup> Fort Williams was established in 1690 by the East India Company in an Indian fishing village. The associated town became Calcutta.

and over; frequently vessels broke their mooring chains, and drifted against each other, or swung ashore; one in our tier broke her stern chain, and came against the ship alongside of us; smashing her quarter boats, and bulwarks; another about a quarter of a mile above us, which was almost loaded, broke her bow fastening, and swung her bows on to the bank; they could not get her off before the tide went out, (it runs out much longer than it runs in), and she broke her back, that is, being loaded, the bows on shore, and the stern in deep water, the weight of the cargo bent her down in the middle, so that it spoiled the vessel; she could not be made good again.

The banks were very steep and muddy, the landings sloping back and being little bays; no foreign vessels used their own boats, every vessel having a native boat to wait on her, and there were thousands of boats on the river; the men, generally one or two, lived in the boat night and day; there was a little covered space about six feet long, with a hoop bent over about four feet high, above the bottom of the boat, covered with matting; they had a little kettle, and a little charcoal, with which they did all their cooking, living almost wholly on rice, which they steamed, and ate with curry, a kind of condiment; they eat with the fingers of the right hand, never putting anything into their mouth with their left; it was astonishing, the amount of rice they would eat, at least two quarts at a meal, although it was very dry and laid up light when cooked, it was very nutritious, and seemed to be the proper food for the climate, the men doing hard day's work in this debilitating climate.

While we were warping up to our berth, the Captain came on deck, and called a native boat; he was going on shore to the consignees; he was no favorite of mine, or any of the crew, and it so happened, that I was tending snatch-block in the waist of the ship; tending

snatch-block was this, there were a number of hawsers<sup>39</sup> tied together, making one rope a quarter of a mile long, or so; the manner of warping was this, a boat took a small anchor and hawser, and carried them ahead of the vessel, say about a quarter of a mile, the hawser fastened to the anchor; we brought the hawser on board, passing it through a hole in the bow, led it along the side of the ship, to a block with an open side, (snatch-block), fastened in the waist of the ship, and then to the capstan<sup>40</sup>, which was in the center of the deck, aft; the use of the snatch-block was to keep the hawser from chafing against the masts, house, etc, on deck, and my duty was, when a knot came to the block, to throw the rope out of the block, let the knot pass, then throw the rope into the block again; the knots were generally bowlines, with quite long ends, some one or two feet long, made necessary by the size of the rope, which was about three inches in diameter; now the Captain came to the gangway where the snatch-block was, to go down the ladder into the boat, dressed in his starched white nankeen pants, and spencer, and looked as though he had just come out of a bandbox; as bad luck would have it for him, he came along just as a knot came to the block; I threw the rope out of the block, and one of the long ends, by accident, flew around his legs; the water in the river was very oily, and the hawser had just come out of the river, naturally not very clean, and it put a Royal Bengal stripe around his legs; they were his go-ashore clothes, fixed up for that purpose for he was a dandy and an aristocrat; well, you had better believe that it looked blue around there, for a few minutes, and it was very choice language that he used; of course, I was very sorry, but duty had to be attended to, and it was his business to look out and I told him so; there were a lot of heads turned the other way, the mate's among the rest, and I knew they felt

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<sup>39</sup> A cable or rope used in mooring or towing a ship

<sup>40</sup> An apparatus used for hoisting weights, consisting of a vertical spool-shaped cylinder that is rotated manually or by machine and around which a cable is wound.

sorry, for I saw them wiping their eyes, as they turned around, and their faces were very long; the result was, that I told the Captain that I would go on shore, and leave him; he said I should not. He went into the cabin, and put on some other clothes, and went on shore, saying to the mate, as he went over the side, to allow no one to go on shore. I went below with Evans, (we had got to our moorings at this time), brought our chests on deck, hailed a native boat, and started to put our chests and hammocks in; the mate forbade us, and told us we had heard what the Captain said; I told him I did not care what the Captain said; I shipped to be discharged here, if I chose, and I chose, and if any stopped us, they were better men than we were, if they succeeded; we fastened ropes to our chests, lowered them into the boat, got in ourselves without molestation, and went on shore; I never went on board of her afterwards; the mate was really glad of it, he did not like the Captain any better than the rest of us.

There was one custom coming up the river, that was different from any other place I was ever in, and that was, we took on a native diver; the frequent anchoring and strong current getting the anchor fouled frequently, making it necessary for a diver to go down, and hitch a trip-rope, or clear the chains; they would go down in thirty to sixty feet of water, it was dangerous business, but they were seldom lost, which seems incomprehensible, as the water was so muddy they could not see, and the current was very strong.

After landing, we inquired our way to a hotel, and followed by six natives carrying our chests and hammocks, two more carrying umbrellas over us, and two fanning us, we made our way to the hotel; you might think this was putting on style, but it was not; it was almost impossible to walk the streets without having a man to hold an umbrella over

you; if you told him you did not want him, and would not pay him, it made no difference; he would insist on doing it, and he received thankfully whatever you were a mind to give; the value of one or two cents for two to four hours, was all they expected, and for carrying our heavy chests, hammocks, carrying the umbrellas, and fanning us, for fully three-fourths of a mile, we paid the whole of them not more than twenty cents, and still found afterwards, that we had paid them double price.

The next day we went to the consignee's office to get our pay; the Captain was there, and refused to pay us off; Evans was an Englishman and familiar with English law; we went down to the Port Warden, or some such officer, I do not remember what they called him, and told him our case; he sent up to the consignees for the Captain to come down, and bring his ship's papers with him; he asked the Captain some questions, looked over the papers, and was satisfied that we had told him the truth; he asked the Captain why he did not pay us; he said we left the ship against his orders, and were deserters; he told the Captain that he knew better, that we had the right to leave the ship when she was secure in port, that we told him that we wanted our discharge, and we had a right to it, and to pay us off; he told us to come to the consignees in the afternoon, and he would pay us; we went up and he made up our pay, which was three pounds, ten shillings per month, but he cut us short one day, not reckoning either the day that we shipped, or the day that we left, the custom being to pay for one of these days; we would not take our money, feeling kind of ugly and we went back to the port officer's office, and stated the case to him; how we had been on short rations, gave him in detail what we were short of and how long; he was pretty mad and sent a native clerk with a line to the Captain and consignees to come to his office, forthwith, with ship's papers; they came, but he did not show them much

courtesy, and asked why they had not paid us as he had ordered; they said that they had offered to pay, but we would not take it; he told them he had heard enough, to pay us from the day we shipped to that day and to pay us so much, I do not recall the sum, for rations we had not been furnished; they tried to explain that we had other things in lieu, but he would not hear them, and when they told us to come to their office for our money, he said, "No, they have run enough, you pay them here in my presence;" they had to go to their office to get the money, and bring it there, when he dismissed them with a "flea in their ear", that he did not want to hear any more trouble from them. We did not have one-half the trouble we should have had in an American ship, and gone to the American Consul; the officers in the British ports were in the English Civil Service, were not dependent on the Captains of vessels, for their fees, all having salaries, and are protected by the Government, so that they are independent. The American Consul, at that time, received all his pay from the Captain or owner of the vessel, and the consul's fees were contingent on them, and he always sided with them.

The next day, Evans shipped on board an English ship, bound home, and wanted me to go with him, but I had had enough of English ships; the one I had left, was overrun with vermin of different kinds; there were millions of small ants, centipedes we would see daily, and I brushed one off my leg one morning, fully four inches long; scorpions, or soldiers, as we called them, from the manner of their walking with their tails sticking up over their back, like a soldier carrying a musket over his shoulder, were very thick, but mostly in the cargo, and did not trouble us, only to look out for them when handling

cargo; I have knocked four or five out of a rotten piece of Sappan wood<sup>41</sup>, which was part of our cargo, a sting from either one of which, or a bite from a centipede was deadly poison in this country, unless taken in season; neither would hurt you unless pinched, then turn on you in self-defense. The scorpion (asp) looks not unlike a tall spider with a body one-half inch through, with a tail an inch or more long; the sting is in the end of his tail. The centipede looks like an ear-wig, or thousand-legged worm; the body is flat, from one-quarter to five-eighths of an inch wide, and I have seen them six inches long; they have circling hooks with which they bit severely, and the bite is very poisonous in this country, but in some parts of the world, their bite is not so deadly; they were in most tropical countries. The Ellen<sup>42</sup> had been trading some three years among the East Indian ports, and got full of all such vermin; cockroaches, we did not mind anything about, any more than we do houseflies, and in fact, they do not trouble one as much. There is no way to clear a vessel, when so infested, only to send her into a cold port; cold weather was about their only exterminator.

I stayed around the city looking around, for two or three days, and then shipped on board the ship Carthage of Boston, Captain Archer; she was taking cargo for Boston.

The city was very unhealthy at the time, the hospitals being all crowded with patients, and the death rate reached as high as six hundred a day; cholera was epidemic.

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<sup>41</sup> Sappan wood, also known as East Indian redwood, comes from a tree that has both ornamental and medicinal properties.

<sup>42</sup> Interestingly there are references to this English ship including a shipwreck off the Irish coast: "On 01-11-1822 the Ellen was wrecked at Ballinascelligs. She was bound for Cork from Gibraltar. Captain Sullivan and crew survived." <http://www.bearatourism.com/visitor/wrecks.htm>

There is also a "watercolor" available of the "Ellen" of Newcastle – The English Snow is shown at sea in two positions off Kronborg Castle – Watercolor on paper – 51 x 68 cm – signed and inscribed - Private Collection in Great Britain" <http://www.fineartemporium.com/se-Petersen-J.htm>



I had been on board about a week, when I was taken with the cholera, and they carried me to the Howard Hospital, which was situated on the opposite side of the river from Calcutta; it was called the sulky side, for what reason, I do not know.

I was taken about four in the morning; we slept in hammocks slung under an awning on deck; I awoke and felt thirsty; I reached out from my hammock, and got a drink of Tamarind water, (we used that for a drink, as the water was very poor, being filtered river water); in a few minutes I felt that it was coming up, although I did not feel sick; I put my head out of a port hole, close by, and threw it up, but felt thirsty again, and drank more, it working the same as before, when I commenced purging, and cramps set in, I knew what was the matter; I awoke the man that slept next to me, and he called the mate; it was about daylight then; he called a native boat, and the second mate, and a man went with me across the river, a mile or so; I continually grew worse, and in crossing the river, I took the bailing dish, and drank large quantities of water, although it was very filthy; the native would not let me drink out of his dish, as he would have lost caste thereby, if he had used it again; when we arrived at the landing, I was very sick; they went up to the hospital, which was but a short distance and got a stretcher with attendants; the second mate asked me if I could walk to the top of the bank with assistance, I told him that I thought so; it was some forty feet, and the last that I remember was that my legs would not work; I remember that they gave me something very bitter, and I thought cut my hair; I had no other recollection for three or four days, and was then so very weak, that I realized but little, except that I was very thirsty, and they would give no water, but a little congee water, which is rice water, about as thick as a milk porridge; that was only an aggravation, but was the only drink that I got for three weeks, and in fact the only food

as well; it was both victuals and drink. I had the best of care; the head doctor was English, the assistants all natives, who were educated doctors and students; all the nurses were native men, and they made very good ones; they all talked English, and were generally intelligent. This hospital was for English patients, no natives being admitted. There were two others in the city, much larger where the beds were free; they were overcrowded, and the patient could not receive as good care; one, the General Hospital, accommodated more than a thousand, and the College Hospital was nearly as large. The price at the Howard was three dollars per week only, which would look very small, but everything was cheap, the cost of living being the least of any place I was ever in, in a civilized country.

Beef was only once cent per pound, and other things that were raised there, in about the same proportion. The currency here although an English port, was rupees, annas and pice; a rupee was about forty-two cents Spanish, four annas for a rupee, and, I think twenty pice for an anna.

I remained in the hospital for about six weeks, when I was discharged. I weighed, when I left the hospital, one hundred thirty-five pounds, and cannot say much for my beauty; they had shaved my head when I went in, not leaving even a scalp lock, blistered the back of my neck and head, my arms, legs, and breast; they were all healed up in a few days, except the one on the back of my neck which was kept running until a day or two before I left the hospital, when that was healed, boils commenced coming on the back of my neck, and for more than four months, I never had less than one, and sometimes three of these comforters, and they were as big as the bottom of a teacup at that; I could not turn my head for that time, only as I turned my shoulders with it. When I got out of the

hospital I went to the hotel where I first stopped; I was still so weak that I could not travel any great distance. I went to the American Consul's found my chest and hammock, my money, which they had taken from my chest, and the Consul had held for me. I found everything all right except some curiosities, which I had left in my rack above my berth; these were taken, I suppose by the crew, as they were never carried to the Consul's office.

I hired a palanquin by the day, and spent the next two weeks riding around. I paid a rupee a day for a palanquin with four men for carriers, and one man to carry an umbrella over me. Their umbrellas were light, about four feet across, with a handle as much as four feet long. The palanquin was a box about six feet long, two and a half feet wide, about three feet height with sliding doors or blinds on the sides, straw matting and pillow inside, and shelf for hat at foot; you could sit upright, with your feet out before you, lie down or recline, as you chose. The box sets on four legs about one and a half feet high, and from each end there projects poles, near the top, which are bent to make them the right height for the carriers; the carriers go two forward, and two behind, the poles laying on a pad on their shoulders; they traveled about four miles an hour, and would keep it up all day; they went at a kind of amble, keeping step, and making a kind of swinging motion, which was just suited to the climate, and made a person feel drowsy. They shifted shoulders about once in five minutes, but did not stop to do it; when it was on one of the pair's right shoulders, it was on the other pair's left, and vice versa.

The beds in the hotels at Calcutta were merely a frame with rattan bottom, like our chair bottoms, with linen spread with grass matting beneath, linen sheets with cotton

pillow covered with fine grass cloth, the whole enclosed with a canopy of mosquito netting, without which no one could sleep.

The city was well laid out, and many of the houses good, although not making much outward show; the Governor General's palace was large, with an enclosed garden of several acres surrounding it, entrance to which was through magnificent gateways. All rooms in the better class of houses and offices were high-studded, from twelve to twenty feet, with a punkah<sup>43</sup> board hung from the ceiling; this was either a board or a covered frame two-thirds the length of the room, the bottom of the board seven or eight feet from the floor in the dining rooms, they would have sometimes two or more; they had a cord attached, with a native to swing it by the cord.<sup>44</sup>

The turnouts were very fine, many of them having Arabian horses, and English or French made carriages; the riding was all done from daylight to nine in the morning, or from five to nine in the evening; at these times of day, you would meet carriages every few minutes, with from four to twelve outrunners, than a four-horse carriage, ( a kind of open barouche), with position behind for two flunkies, two men on each side of the carriage, and two behind; some carriages with one-half as many men, and some with as high as twelve; each man was in livery, and carried a brush that looked like a horse's tail, with a handle about eighteen inches long; the men were ostensibly, to clear the road, and protect the carriage, but really only for show. The carriages dashed along eight or ten miles per hour, the men always keeping their positions and following it for hours.

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<sup>43</sup> A large ceiling fan

<sup>44</sup> the natives would be called punkah-wallah

Dum Dum, some eight miles from the city, or down by the fort, were the favorite drives. The trains for the North and East all started from Dum Dum; it was not uncommon to see two or three hundred elephants tied here; the Zoological Gardens were located there, and were said to be the finest in the world.

All the water used in the city came from the river, was filtered after being pumped up, and was carried around to the offices, and houses in skins; they took the skins off from yearlings, I should think for their size; they were sewed up so as to look like the animal. When filled with water, they were carried on the men's backs, with the head on one shoulder, the water was turned from the mouth into large earthen jars of common clay ware, holding from a few gallons to two barrels each; something of this shape, and set in rows; the water gets fairly cool; ice was a luxury that but few indulged in, except in sickness; the cost of ice to supply a family as we use it, would cost more than the meat and the cook thrown in. The men that carried the water were called Beastly Waller, and the men that swung the punkah board, the Punky Wallers. There was no drainage for the city, the country being almost a dead level.

Rice was the great staple, as you went back from the city.

The city was said to contain about six hundred thousand inhabitants, probably three-quarters of them were natives of the country, but of many distinct castes; some of them were highly educated, and very rich, others of the poorest and most superstitious; the other fourth consisted of all nations of the earth, both civilized and uncivilized; Armenians, Arabs, Turks, Portugese, Dutch, Spanish, Greeks, and many others, you

would meet in large numbers, and all dressed in their native costumes, and talking in their own language.

The Mohammedan religion prevailed with some castes of the natives, and you could fight them better with a piece of pork, than with a club; they would not handle, or touch pork in any shape; they would lose caste if they did. They would throw away their chebook, or pipe, if you should draw a whiff through it, although it cost several dollars. They would not eat of any European cooking or meat killed by an Infidel. One of the native castes worshipped the Ganges, and all of their dead were thrown into the river; you can well imagine the condition of the river, when all the dead from many millions of inhabitants were thrown into it, and besides that, an immense number of dead animals. If it were not for the crows, bramlikits, adjutants, and jackals, all of which were in large numbers, protected by law, the banks of the river would have been uninhabitable.

The English Government employed boats, a few miles above the city, to catch the dead bodies that came down, and sink them with weights, but there was no day while I was there, that you would not see bodies, entirely naked, floating past, with crows or bramlikites<sup>45</sup> sitting on them, making a very disgusting sight; there was no morning that there would not be bodies lodged on the mooring chains of some of the vessels, and I have seen four or five, that had been sunk and broken away, being tied together, across the mooring chains; it was a very unpleasant job to get them off, they being in all stages of decomposition. The jackals would prowl through the streets at night, in droves, after eleven or twelve o'clock and their cries sounded very doleful to me, when I lay in the hospital, the jackals being but a few rods outside the yard.

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<sup>45</sup> Brahminy Kite scavenger found in wetlands of India.

The crows made nests, or attempted to, in the vessels' rigging, and I have had a bramlikite take the meat off a piece of hard tack that I was eating, swooping down, and catching it in his claws. The cook could not set meat outside of his galley without loosing it in a minute. There was a fine of two sovereigns for killing one, and they were very strict in regard to it, they being the only scavengers.



The Adjutants are a large bird, and after gorging themselves, would stand along on the parapet walls of houses, in rows, for hours at a time, without moving; they looked at a distance, like a squad of soldiers, with muskets on their shoulders; they stand on one leg, and with their neck stretched up, are fully five feet high.

The natives had many ceremonies, and processions, in which they carried tinselled images, and with music, march down to the river, where on a platform, they go through their ceremonies; and while all are prostrate, throw the remains in the river; the Ganges being a sacred river to them. The burning of the widow on the funeral pile was practiced three or four miles out of the city, at that time, although forbidden by the government.

I found that I was gaining very slowly, on account of the heat, (no Europeans working through the middle of the day, and the streets were entirely deserted by the whites), and wanted to get away; most of the vessels wanted men, as they had most all lost some but I was not able to do a man's work, and in fact not able to do anything to amount to much; there were three or four American ships in port; I saw the Captain of the ship Argo<sup>46</sup> of

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<sup>46</sup> The Argo was probably owned by Black Star Sailing ship of 967 tons built in New York. Used on the Liverpool to New Orleans route. [http://members.ispwest.com/ronsmith/liverpool/ships\\_a.htm](http://members.ispwest.com/ronsmith/liverpool/ships_a.htm)  
Second reference made for Argo is arrival November 23, 1847 at St. John N.B.

Boston; he wanted three men, but could not get them, and finally agreed to take me; I told him that I would ship without pay, and leave it to him, what to pay me when we got home; if I did not get so as to earn anything I did not want it, but I wanted to get out of the place. She was all loaded and ready to sail, but could not get men, and finally sailed, two men short.

I went on board the next day after agreeing to; she was a ship of about five hundred tons measurement, which was a large ship in those days, although not of the largest class; I think we had no merchant ships at the time, of more than eight or nine hundred tons, and very few of them; the East Indiamen were usually from four to six hundred tons.

We were loaded very heavily, having two hundred tons of saltpetre in bags, for the ground tier, then hides in bales; the rest of the cargo was made up of linseed, gum shellac, camphor, gunny bags, gunny cloth, different kinds of spices, and all the spaces between the boxes and bales, filled with loose ginger root; she was as full as a can of sardines; we had on board, eleven hundred and seventy tons weight of cargo; she was loaded so heavily, that she steered very hard; we had to have tackles on the rudder, when it blew any ways hard, with three men to steer.

We dropped down the river along in the last part of May<sup>47</sup>, or first of June, I do not remember the exact time, and were three days, going down; we had to lay one day there, before we could get out, and found that the Carthage had left only a day or two before, although she came down the river more than three weeks before we did. In going down

Nov 23	Ship Argo	Mitchell	37 days	Bristol	to R. Rankin & Co. - Nov. 13, lat. 45 4, lon. 49 30, spoke ship Wanderer, Patten, from Quebec to Liverpool, 10 days out-all well
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<sup>47</sup> 1844



the river, I undertook to take my trick at the wheel; I stood about fifteen minutes, when the mate noticed that I was as white as a sheet; he at once caught hold of the wheel, and none too soon, for when I let go of the wheel, I could not stand up; he called another man, and told me not to take the wheel or go aloft until I was stronger; it made two of the men that were in my watch, very mad, and they abused me for shipping when I could not work, and making other men do my work; one was a Scotchman, the other Irish, although both claimed to be Americans, having sailed several years in American ships; I was not able to defend myself, if they had assaulted me which they threatened several times, but were deterred by an Englishman, who took my part, and told them that if they plagued me, they would have to him also, before they got through, and he rather shamed them, for pitching into a sick man; he said that he would risk me before we got home; as soon as we got out into the bay with the sea-breeze, I gained fast, and seemingly could not get enough to eat; we had not been out three weeks, before I felt as strong as an ox, and was a great deal better man than I looked; I had not got very fat, and my neck was covered with boils making it stiff; at dinner, one day about this time, one of the men that had previously pitched on to me, pushed me one side, and told me to wait until my betters were served; I told him that I would stand one side for my betters, but not for a miserable pup like him and I pitched into him like a thousand of brick, and handled him pretty roughly for a few minutes, before I let him up, I made him beg, and promise to behave in the future; I then turned to the other one, whom the Englishman had prevented from interfering, and told him that I would serve him in the same way, unless he would promise to behave in the future, which he did, to the great amusement of the Englishman, and the others; they were very humble after that, and I had no further trouble, for I could

handle any man forward, as they found in many a scuffle before we got home. When we had been out some three or four weeks, we had a heavy gale, and sprang the head of our main mast, and a leak at the same time. The Captain was the greatest man to carry sail that I ever saw; he would never take any in, if the ship would stand up with it on; we were loaded so heavy that you could heel her but little, and the sticks might have blown out of her, without throwing her down; now she was obliged to carry short sail, as she leaked so fast; we had to stand to the pumps all the time, when it blew any ways heavy, and had to pump on an average of twenty-two hours per day for ten days; we ran for the nearest port, which was Port Louis<sup>48</sup>, on the Isle of France; we succeeded in getting in there with about two feet of water in the hold; one of the pumps gave out three days before we got in; we struck out the cargo around it, and tried to fix it, but found that it was rotten, and could not be fixed, and that the other was liable to give out any time; we wound canvas around it, and it lasted until we got into port, which was on Sunday; we were pretty well played out, I can tell you, for I do not know of any harder work than working at pumps; we worked two men at the handle, gave three quick strokes, with a pause, and each pair worked five minutes, when two more take it; the officers took their turn with the rest, when they pump ship to keep the ship afloat; we had to work five minutes in fifteen, and do what work was required between, such as trimming sail, getting up cargo to get at pump, etc., and one man was required out of the watch to steer; the pumps throw two gallons to the stroke, and it was wind-taking work, and when a man has worked five minutes, he was glad to stop.

When we got to anchor, in smooth water, she did not leak half as bad. The Captain got some men from shore, and she was free from water the next morning; we then began

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<sup>48</sup> Port Louis, capital of Mauritius (then called Ile de France), NW Mauritius, a port on the Indian Ocean.

lighting our cargo ashore; we had to discharge into lighters, and carry into storehouses onshore; part of the saltpetre had been dissolved, and pumped out through the pumps.

The Captain got a new main-mast ready by the time we had the cargo out; we hauled her down on her side, first one side, then the other, beside an old hulk, and caulked her; she was hove down, and they were caulking her on the Fourth of July, I recollect, for we wanted to go on shore. We had been working like tigers in getting out the cargo, and thought we ought to have a holiday, while we were caulking her; finally the Captain consented, but said we must be off by eight o'clock that evening, ready to go to work in the morning.

We went on shore. It was quite a large city, I should say about forty thousand inhabitants or more; the population was largely negro and French mixture, with a liberal sprinkling of English; it belonged to England, having been captured from the French, who settled there first, and held it many years.

The ground rises very abruptly back of the city, and I should think that the two hills, one at the right, and one at the left of the port, were eight hundred feet high, perhaps two miles back from the water; there was a fortification on one of these hills, and they were practicing with long thirty-two pounders, at a target on another hill back of the city, and about a mile and half off, I should judge; we could see every shot strike in the dirt, from the vessel, and when we went on shore, we went up to the target; it looked about six feet square from the vessel, but we found it to be about thirty feet square; shots that looked as though they had struck within twenty or thirty feet, we found were three or four hundred feet away, and they had hit the target, but two or three times in hundreds of shots, which

shows that long range gunning had not arrived at the perfection that it has at the present day.

At the right of the town, there was a cemetery just back from the sand beach; it was a very beautiful place with a cocoanut grove half a mile along the side of it. We spent the day, until the middle of the afternoon, looking around the city. Among the curiosities to me, were the tops of the gateposts cut out of stone, with an inscription stating that they were cut by a blind man, giving name and date; they were cut in the shape of four square frames interlaced, the size of the frame about two feet, and the arms about three inches square; in the center of the interlaced frame, was cut a round ball, about four inches in diameter, that would just turn around; it was very neatly done in sandstone. There were some beautiful monuments, or rather canopies, for most of them were pillared canopies, or pavilions around a raised stone box, adorned mostly with Catholic symbols, and with a stone walk around; the grounds were adorned with flowers; the whole space of the cemetery, except very narrow paths, seemed to be occupied. In strong contrast with this, was another cemetery along side; with perhaps two acres inclosed with a stone wall six or eight feet high; there the stench was almost unbearable, and it had been occupied many, many times over; bones from all parts of the human body were scattered around on top of the ground, where they had been thrown out in burying others.

The Captain had calculated, pretty certainly, on our coming on board at eight, as he had let the men have but two dollars each, although they wanted five; now it is pretty safe, to assume that a sailor on board of a ship, when she leaves port, has no money, and the Captain knew that the two dollars would be gone before night; he had the boat ashore at eight o'clock for the men, and got about half of them; there were six or eight of us that

had not seen all of the island that we wanted to, and I had a hundred dollars or so in money; we separated from the rest, about the middle of the afternoon, got a team and started down the coast; there were some beautiful plantations, and villas, and an excellent road; we did not get back until the next afternoon, and found the Captain looking for us; he had been all over town, and thought we had deserted.

We went where the monument to Paul Virginia was erected, some eight miles out of the city, I should think, although my memory is not very definite on distances, it was so long ago. The story is a myth, but the monument was a reality. We thought we had enjoyed ourselves hugely; we drank nothing stronger than new cider just worked; we could get two bottles for an English sixpence, so it was not very expensive; it was not often that Jack confined himself to so weak a fluid; the men paid me their proportion of the expense when we arrived in Boston, and were paid off; it was not more than five dollars each.

We went on board that night, and although the Captain was a little cross, and said we would not get leave again, he did not say much; our coming on board sober, when he found we had money, surprised him, and he thought himself lucky to get us back before the money was all gone.

We stepped the mast the next day, put in new pumps, and then started to stow our cargo again; some of the men got up the topmast, and rigging, and in six weeks to a day from the time of entering the port, (which was Sunday,) we left, both going in and coming out on Sunday. The amount of cargo lightened ashore was one thousand one hundred and seventy tons, vessel hauled down and caulked, new mast and pumps put in,

and cargo stowed, all done by the men except caulking and lighting; you can see that we worked well, the Captain was pleased, and did not lay up against us, for staying ashore.

There is one particularity here in reference to tides; there is no regular tide, and although there is a variation in the height of the water, of from six to eight feet, it is not regular, but is governed by the wind; when there is a steady moderate wind the tide does not vary more than three or four inches, at the most; I have never been in a place with less than three or four feet, with this exception.

We had a remarkably good run after leaving here, and although we had a gale when off the Cape of Good Hope, it abated while in sight of the head of the cape, so that we set our studding-sails, and did not take them in again, until we arrived at St. Helena<sup>49</sup>, and then only for the day, as we stopped for a few hours only; the Captain went on shore, and we sailed the same day; so that we did not see much of it, and in fact, there was not much to see; there were six or eight vessels here, one a man-of-war.

We stood on our course, and crossed the line with a good breeze, which carried us within about one hundred miles of the Bermuda Islands, when it whipped around to the northeast, and blew a gale for three or four days; after the gale broke, we stood for Boston; the next day, we saw a wreck and went on board; it was a dismasted schooner, and full of water; her raised deck aft was out of water about six inches, her waist being just under water; she was loaded with lumber, and fish, mostly mackerel in barrels, and half barrels; her boat was gone, the tackle hanging from the davits astern; she was evidently an eastern schooner bound for the West Indies; I dove down into the cabin, and found clothing; one pair of pants with a silver watch in the pocket, although it was spoiled, thumping around; this watch I brought home, and swapped for a gold ring, which

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<sup>49</sup>St Helena: 1,100 miles west of Angola and 2000 east of Brazil

my wife still has. We took about twenty barrels of mackerel from her, and tried to set her on fire, but could not; she was probably dismasted, and capsized in the gale of a few days before; we could not see her name, as it was under water, and did not find any indications of it. As it was rather rough, and the weather dirty, we left her, although if the weather had been good, we could undoubtedly have pumped her out, and towed her into port; I do not think she leaked, and her cargo would have been worth, probably being undamaged, ten thousand dollars; we tried to burn her, so that vessels would not run against her in the night.

We stood up the coast until off Cape Cod; it was very foggy, and at about ten in the morning, the Captain said that we were about two miles from the cape, and the soundings indicated it; a few minutes after the fog lifted about twenty feet, and sure enough there was the cape not more than a mile and half off; the fog, when it lifts on our coast, is a curiosity; when it lifted from the water, there were several vessels in sight, from a quarter of a mile to two miles off; you could see the hull, and men on deck, but they had no rigging, or sails, they being as invisible as though they did not exist; the fog settled down again as we drew off from land; the breeze was light, although fair for us, and we were in hopes of getting into Boston that night; we kept our bell ringing all the time; we could not see five rods; we came near a collision as it was; the first we knew that a vessel was near us, was when we heard a man sing out, "Haul out to leeward", and not more than a ship's length from us; we put our helm down, and the next instant, a Philadelphia packet swept past us, within fifty feet; she was not in sight more than half a minute.

About noon, the wind began to haul around into the northwest, and began to blow a gale; the Captain would not take in the studding-sail<sup>50</sup>, although we were very close-hauled; he did not until they blew away, and the lower studding-sail carried away the boom, dragged it overboard; we could not haul it in, and had to cut it loose, and let it go. We commenced firing guns for a pilot about three o'clock, when about ten miles outside of Boston light, and followed it up once in half an hour, for two nights, all the time in sight of the lights. The Captain had got outside of the swashes, and was determined not to run out. It was very cold, being about the first of November; I suffered a good deal, as I had seen no cold weather for four years, and but little frost, (once or twice at New Zealand, more than two years before.) None of the men went below all this time, as we tacked ship every half hour; the second day, just at night, we carried away our top gallant-sail, jib, and a reef in the topsails, although it was not blowing two-thirds as hard as it had been; the wind hauled a little so that we got in to Union Wharf just at night; no sooner had the vessel been made fast, than every man jumped on shore, although the

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<sup>50</sup> A **studding sail** or **studsail** is a sail used to increase the sail area of a square rigged vessel in light winds.



Photo # NH 43993 USS Monongahela under full sail



mate ordered us to furl the sails, and pick up deck before we left, but the men were entirely worn out, not having shut their eyes for two nights, and wet and cold all the time.

We went to the nearest boarding house, drank some tea, and went to bed. It was about sundown when I went to bed; the next I knew, the sun was shining in my face about nine o'clock the next morning; such was my landing on my native shores, after about four years absence.<sup>51</sup>

I went down to the vessel, and got my things, then went to the owners, McKay & Co., and got paid off. The Captain was there, and as I had shipped without any pay specified, but was to be paid what he chose, I was a little anxious; he told the owners how it was, and said that I was the best man on board; he told them to pay me three pounds, ten shillings, English, per month, which was the highest price he paid to anyone on board; after I got my pay, he took me to McKay, and told him that he wanted me to go out with him the next voyage, as second mate, and made me the offer of the berth; the ship would go out again in about two months, and I could come any time after four weeks, and go on pay; I thanked him and told that I did not think that I should go to sea again, but if I did, I would accept his offer. I never saw the Captain again, but heard from him a couple of years afterwards; I was in Boston, and went down to the owners; Captain Crowningshield had made one voyage to Calcutta, got back the year before, and left their employ; the Captain of the old ship told me, (he was mate when I was in her), that captain Crowningshield bought a schooner, and sailed for the West Indies, but was never heard from, after he sailed; he had always been in square-rigged ships, and never would take in sail, until he was obliged to; undoubtedly, he undertook to carry the same way on a fore-

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<sup>51</sup> November 1844.

and aft schooner, and was capsized, or dismasted, and lost with all on board; the old mate had no doubt that was the way of it.

I left Boston the next day after I was paid off, for Lowell, where I had many acquaintances. I went to #37 Boot Corporation to Mrs. Straw's, where I went when I first came to Lowell; they were very much surprised to see me, not having heard from me since I left Lowell, and not knowing then where I was going. They told me that my guardian, Daniel George, was dead<sup>52</sup>, and I learned many things that transpired since I left home. I had not heard from anyone that I ever knew before, since the day that I left Lowell, until I arrived there again. I took the cars, the next day, to Concord, N.H., and thence by stage, to Warner, and stopped at Watson's Hotel, the same place that my uncle kept before he died; there was no one that knew me, when I got off the stage, but in a few minutes, some of the old neighbors asked me if it was George Runels; it went around very quickly, and it was not more than five minutes, before Daniel George, my guardian's oldest son, came running over, and a more pleased man you never saw; he was the executor of his father's will and what there was of my property in his hands; he took me over to his house, and his wife was as pleased as he; he married her at my father's house, and I used to build fires for them in the best room when he came courting.

I left my things at the hotel, and started over the river to my brother, Daniel Runels, he being the only other one of my father's family living; I met Horace Currier, a short distance before reaching there; he said my brother was in the shoe-maker's shop, and he turned back, and went in with me; as I went in, I said nothing, my brother looked up, but did not speak, but kept looking at me for nearly a minute, and then said, "is this George Runels?" He was very much pleased to see me, as all others seemed to be.

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<sup>52</sup> February 1844 per Warner Cemetery Records

Having about one thousand dollars worth of property coming to me when I was twenty-one years of age, and my not coming home then, they had given up all idea of ever seeing me; they thought surely I would write if living.

I was no great beauty when I got home; I was nearly as dark as a mulatto, my hair was all of a length, not having been cut since I went into the hospital at Calcutta, then it was shaved; I was dressed in sailor style, blue pants and shirt, monkey jacket and Scotch cap, or "Brob" hat that I made myself. I soon got into shore clothes, had my hair cut with soap locks, which they wore, and whitened out by degrees, so that I could go around with the girls, and to dances, without quite so much comment on my looks; I stayed in Warner, boarding with my brother, through the winter, and had generally a good time; attended two dancing-schools two nights in the week, and generally one ball per week, besides waiting on various girls, sometimes taking as many as three at a time.

I went to Topsham, Vermont, to see relatives, and to Newbury, Vermont, to see my stepmother; my cousin, Susan Sawyer went with me, and we were gone about two weeks.

I commenced to visit Mary A. Morrill in the course of the winter, at Webster, or Boscawen, it was then; she was teaching school at Schoodac, and stayed at her brother-in-law's, Abner Sargent's, on Sundays; we became engaged to be married in the spring of 1845, if we both held our minds, but the time when we would be married was not set.

I came to Lowell the last of March<sup>53</sup> and went to work for Mr. Eastman at stone-cutting, for eight shillings per day; his yard was then on Andover Street, between Fayette and High; I worked for him through the year; he moved part of his works onto Western Avenue, where Whitney's lumber yard now is (Plush Mill now); he and J.P. Folsom bought the land, and had their stone yards together. In walking the street one day, I met

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<sup>53</sup> 1845

Leonard Robinson, who went to sea with me, in the old barque, Benizette, that we lost; I parted with him on the island of New Zealand; he was at work on the corporation, and I got him a chance to learn the stone-cutter's trade, with Eastman, and he worked the balance of the season.

M.A. Morrill came to Lowell in the fall, with her sister and husband, and stopped at Isaac Sargent's; we went to Boston one day, and sat up pretty late some nights; I had been up in July; drove up in a buggy, and took her from Warner, to her father's in Springfield, and we were engaged to be married at New Year's.

Robison was married while she was in Lowell; I tried to have her go to the wedding, but she would not, so I went alone.

I boarded with Mr. Hosmer, on Fayette street, the first part of the season, and with Charles Coburn, on Middlesex street, after we went to Western Avenue to work.

I went to Warner about the middle of December, having first engaged a house of three rooms, of Ami Brown, upstairs, on the corner of Suffolk and Lagrange streets, Lowell; I furnished one room, set up the kitchen stove, and got some kitchen furniture, before I went to Warner. I went to Springfield about the 25<sup>th</sup>, and we were married about ten o'clock, on New Year's eve; we were to have been married at six o'clock, but the minister from Enfield, some six miles off, did not come, through a mistake he made in the night, he thinking that it was the next night; Charles Morrill and I started after him, about half-past seven. It was a regular stone-cutter party; the minister, whose name was Phelps, was a stone-cutter; Abner Sargent, Jacob Sargent, and Nathaniel Davis, stone-cutters, were present; it was a very cold blustering time. We started in sleighs the next day for Warner; Charles Morrill, with a load of goods; N. Davis and Martha Davis, Jacob

Sargent and Theodate<sup>54</sup> Sargent, A. Sargent and wife. At Sutton, we met Nathaniel George and wife; he was intending to come to my wedding, and be married at the same time I was, but it was so cold and blustering, that they could not get up, so they gathered in the neighbors, and were married at Warner; no one knew that they were going to be married until that day; when we met them, they were on their way to Vermont; We stayed at my brother's that night, and came to Lowell, by stage and cars, the next day. We stayed one night with Jacob Sargent, on Middle street and went to keeping house the next day, Charles having arrived with our goods. I worked occasionally a day at stone-cutting, but at that time, there was very little doing in the winter, a little jobbing, or something of that sort. The last that I worked out by the day, was drilling engine stone at Norcross mill, near School street between Middlesex street and the canal.

On the first day of April, 1846, Leonard Robison and myself formed a partnership, styled Runels & Robison, and hired a piece of land of William Livingston, at the corner of Middlesex and Thorndike streets, built a small shed of old boards, and started stone-cutting; we commenced with one apprentice, and one journeyman Theodore Jones; we got our tools sharpened at Jenkin's shop just above where the northern depot now is: about June, we built a small shop at the end of the shed, and I sharpened the tools for a while, but soon got a blacksmith by the name of Sommers, and by October, we had ten men at work, about one-half apprentices.

We pushed things all we could; we did the city work, and in the fall, we got the work of the Carpet Co. The first large job of the amount of \$500.00 was for E.T. Watson's house, corner of Chelmsford and Westford streets, now the "Vermont." We employed our hands by the season; the season opened April first, and closed December first; that was

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the general way at that time. We paid the apprentices' board for three months, and then hired them at from five to seven shillings per day; I calculated to do as much cutting as any of the men, did all the taking of work, collecting bills, and running around, besides keeping the books, worked many nights and Sundays. After we took the Carpet work, we worked every Sunday, and every Saturday night for about a year, except in winter, and frequently Sunday night until twelve o'clock; it was on the race-ways, and wheel-pits, which had to be done when the canals were drawn off.

On the first of December, we took account of stock, and found that we had made about \$500.00 each, besides our living, which we thought was very well, as the competition was very close; Eastman and Folsom had yards, and were old stand-bys.

In the spring of 1847, we bought out Eastman's stock, and in the fall of that year, we bought out Folsom.

We went to work at five o'clock in the morning, and worked until seven at night, at all times when we could see that long; at other times, as early and as late as we could see to work.

In the spring of '47, I went to Chateaugay, and Malone, N.Y., to take the stone work for some bridges on the Ogdensburg R.R. for French & Flanders; I made an agreement to do the work, but did not get a written contract; I looked around the county for stone suitable to fill the contract, but could not find any. In sounding for foundations, they found quicksand, where they expected to find ledge; they kept me there for two weeks, when they made an arrangement with the R.R. Co. to tunnel, instead of building the bridge; the Company gave them \$20,000 to give up their contract, and then employed them at a salary to do the work; they never so much as paid my expenses, although I had

as fair an agreement to do the work, as they did. It took four days then, to get home; we came by stage to Plattsburg, steamer to Burlington, stage to Lebanon, and then by cars to Lowell. It taught me a good lesson, which I never forgot, and that was not to trust anyone in a business way, unless I had it in writing.

We worked very hard this year; the Locks and Canal Co. commenced on their new canal, and wages went up, so that it was very hard work to hire men; the Locks & Canal Co. paid as high as \$2.00 per day, which was almost unheard of here, then. Our price for men jobbing was \$2.00 per day; this year, we kept about fifteen hands; our rent was but forty dollars a year, and when December came around, we found that we had cleared about \$800.00 each.

In the summer of that year, we moved into another house on Suffolk Street, near the Square, where we had more room; at Brown's, we had three rooms at \$4.00 per month, and had to come down front stairs, and around the house for everything. We did not stay in this last house but two or three months, as the water stood a foot deep in the cellar, after a rain; we then moved into a new house on Varney Street, near School Street, owned by Daniel Ayer; it was upstairs, and we had plenty of room; I was doing considerable work for Ayer; he was the same man that Ayers City was named after. We lived here several months, Mr. Tapley occupying the lower tenement; when he left, about December, I took the whole house, and rented the upper part to Mr. Stevens, brother of Solon, and Alpha. Mr. Nathaniel Davis was married at our house while we lived in the upstairs part. December twenty-first, after we moved downstairs, our first child, Emma, was born.

About the first of February, I went to Skowhegan, Maine, and to Moosehead Lake; my wife and I went to Skowhegan the last of June, before, to see J.P. Dinsmore, another of the old Benezette crew, whom I left in New Zealand; I happened to meet him on the street in Boston; he was about my age, and we were intimate; they came to Boston with us; we arrived in Boston about ten o'clock, and stopped at his brother's; we could not get into any hotel in the city; the President of the U.S.<sup>55</sup> came on just before us, from Portland, and the celebration in Boston made a great crowd.

We went to Portland by steamer from Boston, then by stage to Augusta, Waterville, Skowhegan, and Dexter; there, we got a horse and sleigh, and a cousin of Robison's by the same name, drove the three of us to the lake, and up the lake, some thirty or forty miles. We started from Deer Island, where we got dinner, to cross to Simms bay, some six miles; it began to snow when we started, and before we got a mile, it began to snow and blow so fast, that we could hardly see; it drifted the track full, so that we could not see the road, and we could not see the shore either way; we had to walk, one before the horse, and the other two behind the sleigh; there was occasionally a bush stuck up to indicate the track, and we kept it up for an hour or so, then lost it altogether, and the only way we knew how to go was by the wind; we kept that in one direction; we struck the land soon after dark, and as luck would have it, we hit the island in the mouth of the bay; we had previously been told that the road went over this island, and that there was an open place above the island, where the current was swift; we soon found the road, and getting into the woods, the wind did not blow so hard; we crossed the island, and struck in shore, knowing there was a lumber camp on the bay, where we were intending to stop; we struck the road in-shore, and followed it back for half a mile, or more, to where they

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had been cutting and hauling logs, but saw no camp; we concluded that the camp was down on the bay; we thought of camping here, but it was very cold, and we had nothing to eat, either for ourselves or horses, and we were very tired; for at least three miles on the lake, we had wallowed through snow, without a track, two feet deep; we took our track back to the bay, and then followed a good logging road down the bay, where they had left the logs, for a mile or more; we got to the end of the road, and were deliberating what to do next, when we saw a light in the woods back a quarter of a mile or more; we went back, took a track that led back into the woods, and soon came to the shanty; we hallooed and a man came out, and we were welcomed, as all were in those shanties; the cook turned out, and got us a good supper of baked beans, bread and butter, and tea; they had a good warm barn, and took good care of the horse; it was ten o'clock when we got in, and by eleven we were snug in blankets, and buffalo skins, with our feet to the fire, and feeling comfortable.

We stayed here three days; we were going hunting the next day after we got there, but the woods were full of windfalls, and the snow three feet deep, so that we could not get half a mile from the camp, in a day; there was a moose within fifty rods of the camp, but we could not follow him.

The next day, we got a half-breed Indian to go fishing with us; we went up the bay about a mile, where a brook came in; we strung our lines for a quarter of a mile along, down around a point, and fished until about four o'clock; we had caught in that time, more than three hundred pounds of trout, about one hundred of them being brook trout of about one pound each, the others lake trout, the largest weighing about eleven pounds; I caught four out of one hole with one bait, that weighed forty pounds. When we got to

camp, the Indian washed off the fish, and we hung them on the ends of the legs of the shanty; he threw water on them from time to time, and in the morning, they were glazed with ice, and looked as fresh as though just caught; we packed them in straw, in our sleigh, and the next day caught a few more, and started out; when we got to the foot of the lake, we got some boxes and packed them, it took four days to get home, and we rode from August to Portland a very cold night; when we got home, we had a very handsome lot of trout, that looked as fresh as when caught.

Immediately after arriving home, I went to Springfield, N.H., where my wife was, and took about fifty pounds of trout along.

The next spring, we took a contract on the reservoir for Boston water works; we took our contract with S. C. Shapleigh, of Gordon Case & Co., of New York; Shapleigh was to quarry the stone, and we were to cut them, and deliver them from Cambridge to the Reservoir, each to receive one-half; we went along all right until fall when he found that he was losing money, and we found that he was going to throw up the contract; we got an estimate once a month; the city had taken the contract away from G.C. & Co., had assumed their subcontracts, and hired them to go on with the work: I went to the superintendent, and explained how we stood, and told him, that I did not want him to give us only a very small estimate for the next month, as we should have to finish the contract, and I wanted all back that I could get; the result was, that he gave us but nine hundred dollars, when Shapleigh expected thirty-five hundred, and intended to stop when he got it, but he did not get enough to stop on the next week, one of the contractors came up, came to me, and said he had brought up the two thousand dollars, which the city had voted to give us, and he wanted a receipt for it; I asked him what two thousand dollars he

meant; I was very glad if the city was so generous, but I had not heard of it before; he was very much surprised, and wanted to know if we had not written a letter to the commissioners, asking for pay for losses on the work; I began to "smell a mouse" by this time, and told him that I would take the money, but he did not know about giving it; all the money had come through me; I told him how things stood, and was pretty mad when he told me that a letter had been written in the name of the contractors; the result was, that I went with him to Shapleigh, and we had some very plain talk; I told him that I had never begged, and never intended to, and I did not want anyone to beg in my name; the man carried the money back to Boston. We went down the next day, and I utterly refused to have anything more to do with Shapleigh, I would go on and finish the job, or he might; it resulted in our selling out to him, and Robinson was to oversee the work at Westford, where we were cutting it by the day; he bought our things there at cost; the contract was for the basin. The next year we took the contract on the Court House at Lowell, for the stone work and stuck to our business, we were then running twenty-five men.

In the spring of 1849, the gold excitement in California broke out, Robison wanted to go, and in the winter of '49-'50 he went, I remaining at home to wind up the business.

He wrote after he got there to have me make up a lot of boots, and bring out. I sold the business to Theodore Jones, Stillman Robinson, a brother of my partner, and Perry, a stable-keeper. In the meantime, I had set several boot-makers to work, making a custom boot, double fronts, and long legs. Kittridge put all the men he could get on them, Keys also made some, and I had some made at North Chelmsford, in all, several hundred pairs.

On September twenty-fifty, eighteen fifty, I started for California, expecting to find Robinson, but while crossing the Isthmus, I heard from Ed. George, and Gray, that Robinson had crossed two days before for home. Previous to this, we had moved to the corner of School and Butterfield Streets, where Charles, our second child, was born.

When I got to Cruces, which took five days, I found that I had to unpack my boots and things from cases, and put them into bags. Of this trip, I will copy from diary. Put my goods on board Steamer Philadelphia, at New York, on the 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1850, paid \$65. for steerage passage to Chagres, and the boat started on the twenty-eighth. Nothing of particular interest happened on the passage. On the third of November, sailed along Crooked Island, pleasant scenery; on the fourth passed around the east end of Cuba half a mile from shore; San Domingo in sight today to the eastward of us. Landed at Chagres a little past noon on the seventh; took my freight on shore; I engaged to take seven passengers up the Chagres river<sup>56</sup>; I took those that had but little baggage, and contracted with a Jamaican negro to take us and the baggage, so that I got my freight up for nothing. We got up ten miles that night, paid fifty cents to sleep on poles with mats laid on them, in the loft of a native house; there were ten of us slept there; had to go up a notched stick; the family slept in hammocks slung to the poles we slept on, and the pole that was on one side of me had a hammock, with a woman and a sick baby in it, and she was swinging it most of the night, but it was the best we could do. It rained hard most of the night; we started at daylight the next morning; we met parties this day, from Lowell, James Gray, Ed. George, and others, coming home from California; they told me that Robinson, my partner, had gone down the river ahead of them. We got about eighteen miles at dark, and could get no farther; stopped in the boats, without any cover, all night.

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<sup>56</sup> River across the Panama Isthmus

The river rose eight feet during the course of the night. The next morning, got two miles, and stopped for the day. The water was so high, we could not stem the current. Parrots and beautiful plumaged birds were plenty, and we saw many monkeys. On the tenth, went fifteen miles up the river, slept on the ground in native hut, with nothing but a dry cow-hide under me. Living very poor, in fact, just what you could catch. Got to Cruces at dark none of the passengers that came off with us, have yet arrived. Got into a house called a hotel, kept by a Spaniard. The cholera prevailed here some. I found that I could not get my boots across in cases, so I bought canvas, and made bags,. They were paying twenty-five dollars for a mule or horse to ride across some twenty-seven miles. There was a man taken with the cholera in the house where I stopped, on the thirteenth. On the fourteenth, I met James P. Dinsmore, who was one of the old Benezette's crew; we passed part of the day together; he was on his way home, sick of California. He had stayed there but a few months. In fact, there were almost as many coming back, as going, and their report was not very encouraging. I got mules this day, and started for Panama. Paid seventeen dollars each for seven pack mules to carry myself and baggage across. Many of our passengers turned back; I rode across alone on the worst road a man could conceive of; it rained most of the time like a heavy shower. Got to Panama at dark of the 15<sup>th</sup>. My freight did not get in until the next night; the steamer sailed two hours before it arrived; I went back several miles to hurry it up, but could not get it in season; it was thoroughly wet, so that I had to unpack and dry it. I hired a room at the American House. Sold my blacking, brushes, etc., here, as the brushes were nearly spoiled, the glue having dissolved, and when they were dry the back would peel off. I was obliged to stay here until the first of the month, before another steamer sailed. I tried to sell my boots here,

but could not get any more for them than they had cost me, and pay my passage home, so determined to lose more or less.

This is a quaint old place, the buildings being made mostly of stone and brick, and covered with stucco, built in the Spanish style, with court yard in the center, stable and store houses on the ground floor, and rooms above, leading off from a piazza in the court yard; the rooms more like cells in a prison than anything else, all paved with brick or tile, and all roofs covered with tile.

The city was surrounded by a wall some twenty feet high, the gates of which were closed at night, although there was quite a town outside the wall. I think they did not usually close the gate but they had just had trouble in the state, and were in a ferment. I went to cock fights, fandangos, (dances), bull-baiting, etc. I went some four miles around the bay to old Panama; it was nothing but old ruins. The old guns in the wall of Panama were bronze metal, about ten feet long, thirty-two, and twenty-four pounders, and quite valuable; I should think there were forty or fifty of them, relics of the old Spanish reign. There was a grand celebration here on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The image of the Virgin Mary was carried through the streets in a grand procession, with ringing of bells, etc. The fruit is very good here, but higher in price than at home; oranges ten cents each, but very nice.

I have seen some very hard cases of destitution among those returning from California; I saw a man with wife and two little girls, crossing on foot, the mud on an average of six inches deep, and such mud; it is red, and about the consistency of mortar and with all the sticky qualities of paint. There is some of it that shows on my trunk to this day, thirty-three years.<sup>57</sup> They were out of money, and trying to get back to the

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<sup>57</sup> This perhaps gives us a date for George Runels' transcript of 1883.

states; the man carried all their baggage in a bundle; it looked like a hard case for them to get through.

Gambling was carried on here with Spanish energy, and it seemed to be about all the energy they displayed, except at cock- and bull-fights. I saw the priests with their hats and black gowns on, on Sunday afternoons in the gambling saloons, betting on the wheel of fortune, and playing cards at tables, with any and everyone that would play. Colonel Fremont, and Jessup crossed the Isthmus at the time that I did; Colonel Fremont was carried in a hammock slung in a pole, the pole carried by natives. Lieutenant Blair and wife were with them. She was General Jessup's daughter.

The steamer Californian arrived in the twenty-first. Had word that Howard and Son, who ran a line of steamers, had failed. The passengers that came in from California, gave discouraging news. I succeeded in getting my freight on board the steamer by giving up my berth to stow a part of it in, and paid one hundred and fifty dollars for a steerage passage to San Francisco. Every thing was in a rush, when the steamer was about to leave. The Californian had accommodations for about three hundred passengers; they took eight or nine hundred; you may believe that she was crowded. We sailed on the first of November. Had to go several miles to the Island of Tobago, and paid \$2.50 to get on board; the whole business was an imposition. We sailed at seven P.M. got no dinner, and hardly any supper. There was every class on board, more than they had staterooms for. Fremont and wife had a cabin. In the steerage, every berth was full, and the decks covered. There were twenty or thirty German and French Jews, two or three Jewesses, two French girls, two or three negro women, one woman with three small children, one man with wife and baby, the baby born coming out on the other side; men from about

every State in the Union, almost every foreign nation; taken together, I think I never saw a bigger set of hogs in one pen.

It was the best place to study human nature, that I ever saw; they could not cook enough, with the facilities that they had, in eighteen hours out of the twenty-four; it took three settings of the table for each meal; they could not all get their breakfast before dinner-time, and it would be eleven o'clock at night, before all could get their supper. I slept on deck for the whole passage up, and it was much the best place; the stench below was unbearable; many were sick, some with Panama fever, dysentery, and other diseases. We had a pleasant passage, and my health was fair. We had some rather lawless times; the steerage passengers would rob the galley of the food intended for the cabin; would steal turkeys, biscuit, in fact, anything they could; the Captain threatened, and they had quarrels with him every day; the steerage lived about as well as the cabin, for all had to take about what they could get. We met several steamers loaded with passengers, coming from California; spoke several, and got papers; their tone was not very encouraging. Reached Acapulco on the 9<sup>th</sup>; two nights before reaching there, saw a volcano in full blast all night. We stopped over until the next day, and took coal; I went on shore in the morning, and stayed until evening; the houses were mostly adobe, or dobe, as they called it, one story, and Spanish style; the old fort, on the point as you go into the harbor is rather picturesque; the harbor is very good; the land makes off to quite a hill back of the town, where there are several brooks of good water; I had a good wash, had my clothes washed, and traveled all over the place. A good many crossed the country to Vera Cruz, and took passage from there, but it was a dangerous trip, in the then state of the country, and the feeling against the Americans. They crossed on horseback and it usually took



several weeks. I was very much pleased with the way they ground the corn, which was white; it was done by the women, on a stone with a stone rolling pin; it was more bruised than ground; they make cakes of it, which were very good; they also made a drink of it, which they were fond of; they mixed it with something else, and fermented it.

The meat markets were well supplied with beef, and poultry; the beef was cut in strips, hung over poles, and sold by the ell.

We arrived at San Blas on the 11<sup>th</sup>; did not land; got some very good oranges; an English man-of-war lay here, and played "Hail Columbia", as we passed. We had the Mexican and California mails on board, and stopped at the ports on the coasts, to leave them. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, the child died, that was born coming out, on the other side. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, we reached Mazatlan, it was the largest, and neatest place visited; went on shore and had a very pleasant time running around; got some fruit. There was a brig laying here, which started from Panama on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June; the Galena, by name; there had been more than twenty deaths on board since she left, full of passengers; they were nearly starved, when they got here; the vessel was condemned, and they had to get along the best they could. We left in the evening; we left a sick lady here. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, arrived off the port of Los Angeles; here we left a man, wife and child, the man sick; they had one hundred and fifty miles to go, and but three dollars in money; we took up a subscription, and supplied him with sufficient to get through with. We had several subscriptions on board, for some pitiable cases.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, reached Santa Barbara, and Monterey on the 20<sup>th</sup>; did not go on shore at either place; the old town of Monterey was over the sand hills from the port; they have since built a town on the bay. We took twenty more passengers from Santa Barbara;

most of them from Chelmsford, and Lowell, but I was not acquainted with them or anyone else on board.

We arrived at San Francisco on the 21<sup>st</sup>. On the whole, I had a pretty good time coming up, certainly a very exciting one, for there was a good deal of sport, and some ingenuity displayed, in robbing the cabin of its provisions, we cooked turkeys, chickens and yams, which we laid in with the firemen to take off for us, when we threw them down the windsail that led into the fireroom; they would throw them into the ashpit, and when all was quiet, they would scald them under the gauge-cocks, and roast them before the furnace door; many a midnight supper we had; that is, about a dozen of us, who got it up. The way we got the turkeys, was this: we would get into a "jaw" on the upper deck, where the coops were, just at dark; it would end in a rough and tumble fight; in the melee, we would knock over a coop, and let out the occupants, and they never got them all back; they missed them, and tried to keep the passengers away from the coops, and put men to watch, but it was no use, there was such a crowd, they could do nothing; we considered it legitimate, as they charged us an enormous price for passage, and gave us no accommodations for it, and we took things into our own hands. There were several deaths on board, and a good deal of sickness, and the sick got more luxuries from our dozen, than from the ship.

We landed at San Francisco about ten in the morning, the wind blowing a gale; two vessels sank at their moorings, the night before, one loaded with corn; there were no wharves, and we had to land in lighters; got a permit to land my goods.

Took my freight on board steamer for Sacramento; concluded to carry my goods into the country, as everything was very low here, and the market overstocked. I stopped at

the Sacramento House; everything here was in a hurry, houses built in a week, that would ordinarily take two months; everything was thrown together; the best hotel was plastered with cotton cloth, and you could see a shadow through the partitions; the fleas did duty as watchman, for I certainly could not sleep a wink for them; the gambling houses were the principal places of resort, and occupied every street corner on the main streets; the town was on a steep hillside, too steep to drive a team up; they were building one wharf, and a jail; I think they will want a large one; shooting in the gambling dens is a daily occurrence, and everyone carries a pistol.

I arrived at Sacramento on the 23<sup>rd</sup>; there was a little cholera here, but not much. Sold about two dozen pair of boots here at \$14.00 per pair; they cost five dollars at home. Stopped at the Pacific Hotel; twenty-four bunks, three tiers high, in one room, a sack of hay, and woolen blankets made the bed; it was the best there was. The gambling houses are in operation the twenty-four hours, night and day; gold changing hands by the ton every day. On the twenty-sixth, I started for the mines; got letters from home while at Sacramento. It was a sight to be remembered both here and at San Francisco, when a mail steamer arrived. As soon as a mail was known to arrive, they began to form a line at the post office; the line would in an hour extend two or three blocks, and double back, and thousands have stood nearly all day, before they could get a chance for their letters, and then perhaps have none. I did not try for mine until the third day; I could not put my letters in, the first day, there was such a rush. The rate of postage was for over three hundred miles, ten cents, for half an ounce; I paid forty cents each for mine; they had no stamps, and were not prepaid.

We got out fifteen miles the first day, through a fine level country; things began to look a little green; a large part of the distance was through oak openings; the oaks fifty or a hundred feet apart, and the road went anywhere, was hard and smooth everywhere; we followed up the American river, one branch of it; reached Mud Springs, thirty miles, on the 27<sup>th</sup>; stayed here a couple of days, and sold some boots at \$16.00 per pair, then went three miles farther up to Diamond Springs<sup>58</sup>. I was not well for several weeks, while in this vicinity; chills and dysentery; had a doctor twice while here; he stopped in the same house with me. I stopped at a house kept by a Mormon by the name of George Snyder; his wife was with him; there were but three rooms in the house; one a sleeping room with about ten bunks, one a bar-room, and gambling room, and the third, a kitchen, dining room, and family bedroom combined, a curtain across one end to make the bedroom; he had a child born, while I was here. He kept the only public house, and had the only cow in the place. There were forty or fifty houses, all shacks, and the "shacks" all came from one tree, so you can see that the houses must have been very small, or the tree very large, and both were true; the houses were small, and the stump of the tree was eight feet across; they had worked up a hundred feet of the tree and there was enough of it left, if it would split well, to make another village.

I traveled to the adjoining mining camps from here, packing my boots on my back from this place; I sold some at Logtown<sup>59</sup>, Hangtown (Placerville), Ringold, Dead Man's Hollow, Matthews'



<sup>58</sup> On Highway 49, South of Placerville, CA

<sup>59</sup> Logtown is located in Logtown Ravine about mid-

Creek, Weaverville, Macosmer River, Indian Springs, and the mines between these places. I prospected some, but did not get any tools of my own; I would prospect a few hours at a time, when I had nothing else to do. There was some grand scenery through which I passed, and going on foot, and not being in a hurry, I enjoyed it; I borrowed a rifle of Mr. Snyder, and when I did not have a load of boots, I carried it with me; there was any quantity of gray squirrels, both tree and ground quail, and some doves.

The hills through the region were something to be remembered; the one that I went down to go to the Macosmer river was fully a half mile long, and the grass green on the side, but so steep, that I had to "slab" down it. Some miners had packed some flour to the top of the hill, and would have to go four miles to get down with their flour; they took a fifty-pound bag of flour, and tied it to the top of two little trees, then one took hold of the butt of one tree, and the other, of the other butt, spread them about four feet apart; then they slid down the hill, letting the flour slide after them on the brush; they would stick their heels into the ground to keep them from going too fast, but this would not have held them if it had been wet, they would have gone like "shot off a shovel." Dr. Barr and I prospected here for a day or two. There were some remarkable rocks here, where the river came down through a ledge for fully a thousand feet, and so steep that you could not climb it; I spent several hours throwing stones off the ledge; they would bound hundreds of feet, before they would strike, and a stone that would weigh several hundred pounds would fly to pieces, before it would reach the river, and I could not hear it strike on the rocks at the bottom; the stone seemed to be a coarse kind of granite, and in the bed of the river, they were worn into all kinds of shapes; some had holes worn some fifteen feet clear through them; some of the holes not more than eight inches across, and some five

feet; there were innumerable pits of all sizes, they would be perhaps three feet across at the top, and five or six feet down, would be five feet across, and as smooth as if polished. When we were there, the water was low; and we could not see it for twenty rods; it was down under the boulders, but when the water was high, it evidently ran over the whole mass with great rapidity, and then holes that are not worn clear through, are partly filled with pebbles, and stones of all sizes, and it is their whirling round that wears the holes; there were soft and hard places in the stones.

We passed through the Digger Indian country, and saw many of them, but none that were hostile, though we passed by their camps after they had left them; there was a company of about a hundred volunteers, scouting for them, and several miners had been killed in that vicinity.

Placerville was the first town after crossing the Sierras, and most of the overland emigrants arrived there; this was the season that so many died on the plains; it was estimated that forty thousand crossed this season; many did not arrive until December; and many of them were pitiable objects; there were two very intelligent men who stopped where I did, that described their journey to me; they said that on the sixty mile desert, there were dead animals enough to reach across, if they touched one other all the way; wagons by the thousand, provisions by the ton, and there was hardly anything that could not be picked up; they used the wagons for firewood, and they said they had taken a wagon wheel; put bacon in the box, set fire to it, and fried their bacon over the fire, using the wheel for a stove; rifles and shot-guns that they would get sick of carrying, after their animals gave out, they would throw away or smash up; they said they changed theirs

when they saw a better one, but later threw them all away except a rifle, which was one I borrowed from Snyder.

The amount of suffering was incalculable among those immigrants; water was short, and grass scarce, and after the first few thousand had passed along, it was almost gone; sometimes they would go several miles out of their way to get a little grass for their animals; there was hardly a mile for the two thousand across, that you would not see a little mound that covered a shallow grave, more especially after they left the Platt river; and across the desert, they were especially thick and shallow, some of them hardly covered up, for it was death, to remain here long; they had to carry all the water for themselves and animals, and when man and beast are nearly worn out, two days' water makes a load.

Companies fitted out at Placerville, and crossed five hundred miles over the Sierras on horseback, taking eight horses to the man. They picked up wagons, loaded them with provisions, and merchandise that was thrown away, they got everything needful, harnesses for their horses and all; all they took with them, was enough to last until they got to the desert. One wagon brought in a ton of quicksilver, which they found in one pile. It was worth four dollars per pound in Placerville.

The two men that told me of their trip, started with a four-horse team, two saddle horses, and two tons of freight. They arrived with two horses, and just what they had on their backs. Their outfit cost them three thousand dollars, and the horses were not worth ten dollars, when they arrived; they saved the one rifle, only for protection.

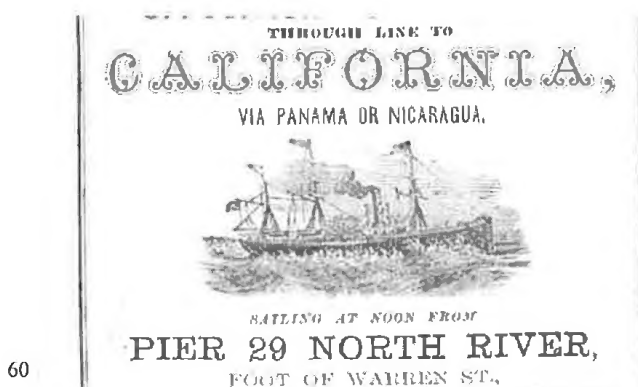
I finally sold the last of my boots on the sixth of January, and started for Sacramento. I had quite a bag full of gold dust slung over my shoulder; it was in buckskin bags, and

these were in a little hunting bag. I arrived in Sacramento the next day, and got letters from my wife. I found that I could get such boots at Sacramento, as I had been selling, for \$6.00 per pair at retail; I had sold mine at an average of about \$15.00 per pair, and took all my pay in gold dust, as there was very little money in circulation. I carried gold scales, and took gold at \$16.00 an ounce. It netted me from the mint, after I got home, \$18.00 per ounce. I left Sacramento on the eighth, and arrived in San Francisco on the ninth. Slept in sheets going down the river, for the first time since leaving New York, and had not left my pants off since I left for the mines. Mr. Spear, the clerk of the boat, came out with me, and was one of the twelve. I stopped at the Texas house, and saw several Lowell parties. I left San Francisco on the tenth of January, 1851, on the iron English steamer, Sarah Sands. There were but twenty-seven steerage passengers, and everything very good. There was plenty to eat, and plenty of waiters; she was fitted to carry six hundred passengers, so that we had all the room we wanted; she was very slow but staunch. We arrived at Acapulco on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Passed the day and evening on shore; got pineapples, oranges, bananas, etc. and had a pleasant day. Started the next day for Panama, where we arrived February first. The last day on board, I was quite sick, and when I landed, I fainted twice. I got fever and ague when I went out, or the Panama fever, as they called it, which is the same thing in an aggravated form. I stopped one day at Panama, and then started on foot for Gorgona, which is farther up the river than Cruces, and eight miles or so less across. It was now the dry season, and quite different from what it was, when I went over; the road was hard and very fair. I carried my gold in the bag, slung by a strap over my shoulder, and it nearly wore through the skin. Robberies were very frequent here, and it was risky carrying it. A man was robbed of



fifteen hundred dollars, within three miles of Panama, the day I started across. We slept about twelve miles out the first night. Our bed was a piece of canvas, which was stretched over poles about two feet apart; the canvas was as much as thirty feet long, and fastened at each end; it was under a shed without sides. The first one in bed, his bed would sag a foot, while the others would be flat, but if your neighbor turned over, or took his weight off, down you would go. We got to Gorgona about two the next day, and started down the river. The river was a small concern to what it was when we went up; we arrived that night at the twelve- mile house, where we stopped the first night going up, and got to Chagres on the sixth. They were working at several places along the railroad, as we came down. Everything was green and beautiful. I shot a pistol ball into a sixteen foot alligator, as we rounded the point; he was not more than twenty feet away.

I got a ticket on board the Prometheus<sup>60</sup>, one of the Vanderbilt's steamers, and went on board the seventh. Chagres was a very unhealthy place, and I don't think a northern white man could live there a year; every man that had been there two months, looked like a corpse; a man would shake his teeth out in less than six months.



60 Wooden side-wheeled steamer, built by Jeremiah Simonson, New York, for Cornelius Vanderbilt. Launched August 3, 1850, she went into service on December 26, 1850, on the New York - San Juan de Nicaragua run. She later continued in this service with Charles Morgan, until September, 1854, when placed on the New York to New Orleans and San Juan run. The dates of her withdrawal from service and condemnation are not clear.

Vanderbilt<sup>61</sup> was on board himself, and they took one hundred passengers<sup>62</sup>, direct for New York, but there were about two hundred that wanted to go to New Orleans, and he took them at the same price as though they were going to New York, so we were four or five days longer getting to New York. We started on the eighth at night; the steamer was very fast; we had very poor fare on board; paid \$40.00 for fare to New York; the fare out was \$65.00; saw Providence island on the ninth; weather pleasant; we met several steamers bound for Chagres; we arrived at New Orleans on the fourteenth, in the morning; went on shore, and traveled around all day, and went to the Jenny Lind concert in the evening. The next day, I traveled over the city; went to the mint, and other places of interest.

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<sup>61</sup> Vanderbilt did indeed capitalize on the Gold Rush to establish this line but there is no record of him personally sailing with the *Prometheus* in Jan 1851. The only mention is w.r.t. the *Prometheus* owing the Nicaraguan port money. These trips were referred to as "death traps" because they were overloaded. It is somewhat unlikely that Mr. Vanderbilt would have inconvenienced himself.

<sup>62</sup> There are some inconsistencies for sure, several articles in the New York Times refer to the arrival of the *Prometheus* in 1851 including notes that indicate passengers to 400 or 500. So clearly the *Prometheus* could carry more than 100. An arrival note from the New York Times Oct 6, 1851 refers to the unprecedented time of the voyage as 28 days but this refers to the total time from California, not the voyage that left San Juan del Norte (see quote below),

"New York Times - Oct 06, 1851 p. 1 owned by Cornelius Vanderbilt

#### Arrival of the *Prometheus*

The steamship *Prometheus*, Capt. *Henry Churchill*, arrived at this port, on Saturday after noon, from San Juan de Nicaragua, with news from California to the 6th September, the passage having been made from California, over the Nicaragua route, in the unparalleled short time of twenty-eight days.  
<http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/passengerlists/nyt/prometheusoct1851.htm>

There is a direct reference to the Jan 1851 voyage that George Runels took  
<http://www.maritimeheritage.org/ships/ss.html#SSPacific>

**"SS *Prometheus* Sailed from San Juan del Norte to New York in January of 1851. Nicaraguan port officials claimed she owed them \$123, which the Captain of the *Prometheus* refused to pay and sailed. The Nicaraguan official reported them to the British Consul, who sent out the British gun boat *Express*. The *Express* ordered her to stop and when the Captain refused, she fired close to her and threatened to fire a shell into her. The *Prometheus* returned and paid the dues."** Later on Vanderbilt established a new route through Nicaragua that was alleged to save 600 miles.

There was a very large fire close to where the steamer lay; burned over nearly a square. We started on the sixteenth for New York.

I was not greatly impressed with New Orleans; it lay very flat, drainage poor, being in the gutters of the streets; cotton and cotton presses every where in the vicinity of the levees; sugar and molasses hogs heads by the mile; in fact, sugar, cotton, mules, and niggers seemed to make up the river population in about equal numbers. The steamers that went and came at all hours, seemed to be great floating rafts, piled with cotton, twenty feet high, and then a long house on top, with a cupola on top of that; the first is the cabin, and the other, the pilot house. The scenery, as you go up to or down from, New Orleans, was peculiar; you looked down from the vessel on to the plantations, which were lower in many places than the water, and see the slaves at work; now and then, you would see a small collection of buildings; there would be one fair-sized country house, and perhaps twenty or thirty cabins, not more than twelve feet square, and built very cheap, and near them a large sugar house; then back as far as you could see, it looked to be swamp; a few trees with Spanish moss hanging down on them, made it look a picture of desolation.

We had a very quick and pleasant passage, arriving at New York on the twenty-second; the papers stated that it was the quickest passage ever made from New Orleans to New York. Vanderbilt would not take a pilot, but piloted the vessel in himself.

There was a big Washington's Birthday celebration going on in New York, with fire works, and a general good time. I went to Philadelphia on the twenty-fourth, and had the chills that night; took my gold to the mint, and left it for coinage. Came back to New York, and started for Springfield, N.H., by way of Nashua, where my wife was, at her

father's; she had stayed there while I was gone, with the exception of a couple of weeks in Lowell. I found the folks pretty well, but I had the ague for several days after I got home.

After a few days, I went to Lowell, settled up with Robinson, and began to look for something to do. About the last of March, I went to Great Bend, on the Erie railroad, and then some forty miles up, into the coal regions, to look at some railroad work that I thought of contracting for, but did not make the contract. I came back then to New York City, and went up the Hudson River, stopping at different places, trying to get contracts for cutting stones for bridges, etc. They were then building the Hudson River Railroad. I went from there to Whitehall, and Burlington, and so on to Georgia, Vermont, where my wife's brother Charles was stopping.

I took a notion to buy me a farm, as there did not seem to be much of a chance contracting. While in New York, I had quite a notion of starting a stone yard, and went so far, as to get the refusal of a new wharf, which was then away up town, at the foot of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. I could have the lease of it for ten years, for \$15.00 per year, but the stone-cutters' societies would have killed me off, unless I came into the combination, which I would not do; they killed granite work in New York. It was all in the hands of foreigners.

I stayed in Georgia a week or so, went so far as to buy a farm, and had the deed made out, when the man backed out; I made a bargain for another, but the man would not get possession for a year, and I would not take it. I went to Waterbury, Vermont, and bought a farm along the Waterbury River; I then went to Springfield and my wife and I went to Lowell, where our things were stored, and moved to Waterbury. I bought the farm and farming tools, twelve cows, and dairy tools; it was three miles from the village; the man

that I bought of, brought a load of his goods down, and took up a load of mine, so the day we moved on, he moved off. We could not get help, and were left with twelve cows, pigs, hens, and other stock on our hands. I got the man's hired man to help us milk at night; my wife had never lived on a farm, and I had not done anything on one since I was sixteen years old. It was in May, the planting was all done, but hoeing coming on. We had a pretty hard time of it, until we got broke in; some of the butter, perhaps was not gilt-edged, and the cheese was very poor; I found that it was not all play, or money on a farm. I made many improvements on the farm, built a nice barn, brought water to barn and house, built ice house, and fences. I stayed on the farm until the fall of 1854. In October of that year, I had changed work with one of my neighbors and we were ploughing with his horse and mine, when his son came up from the village with a letter for me; it was from my old partner, Robinson, who had been in the stone business at the old place in Lowell for a couple of years; he wrote that he had failed, that the property was in the assignee's hands, was going to be sold the next week, and that I had better come down and buy it; I was sitting on the plow at the time, and said, "Now if I can sell my farm, I would go back into my old business again;" just at that time, a man drove up to the house, which was about thirty rods off, hitched his horse and came out into the field; I had the letter in my hand at the time and he wanted to know if I wanted to sell my farm; I said "Yes, that I did not want to, ten minutes before, but I did then," and told him why. I told him my lowest price, and he wanted that I should show him the bounds and the land; I got a boy to drive the team, and went over the farm with the man; it was about four o'clock in the afternoon, when he came; he liked the place, and said he would trade, if his father-in-law who was interested with him, agreed. They lived twenty miles from

there, and he wanted to know how much time I would give him to decide; I told him that if I sold it must be closed up within twenty-four hours, as I should be obliged to go to Lowell the next day after that. He brought his wife and father-in-law over the next day, and we made the trade and writings; my wife was very loath to sign the deed, and did not want me to sell. The following day, I went to Lowell, and bought the business the day following that, and bought it cheap. I went back to Waterbury, sold out all my farming tools, produce, and a large share of my household goods; sold all at private sale, and moved to Lowell within three weeks from the time I sold the farm. We left the children, excepting Henry, at their Grandfather's in Springfield, until we should go to keeping house; Henry was born in Waterbury March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1852. We went to boarding with Mrs. Melville on Appleton Street, boarded there most of the winter, and after that, at the Howard House, and went to keeping house, in the month of March in a small house on Thorndike Street, that I hired from Mrs. Daniel Carter; it stood on the corner of Congress Street, where I built the cottage.

The year before I was married, I joined the Odd Fellows; they met then on Merrimack Street, in Richardson's Hall, between Central and Prescott streets; I joined the Masons, I think in 1855, Ancient York Lodge, and soon after, Mt. Horeb R.A. Chapter, Ahasuerus Council, and Pilgrim Commandery.

The only opposition in Lowell, when I bought the business was Sweet, Clough, and Davis; I went to them, when I came down, and proposed that I should buy out Robinson, and we should all go into Company, and they agreed; competition had been so brisk, that they had not, previously, been able to make any money; ostensibly there were two firms, but in reality only one. In 1855, I took the Lowell jail, and that made it necessary that we

should come together, although for two years, we kept two yards, one on Middlesex street, and one on Western Avenue. We bought a quarry in Danvers, and opened it in the fall of 1855. We were driven to its purchase by the Westford quarrymen, who went into a combination, with one thousand dollar bond as forfeit, not to furnish us with stone under a certain price, and they went to figuring stone-cutting, and bid on the jail. We worked the quarry for two years, Mr. Sweet having charge of it; we finished the jail in 1857, and the Westford combination was broken up. We continued as a firm until 1871. I built the cottage house in 1858.

When I returned to Lowell, I was worth between five and six thousand dollars, and when I built the cottage, about ten thousand; I bought the cottage house-lot in 1856, and in 1858, bought fifty feet more front land, to the corner of Congress street, and one hundred and eighty feet deep on the street, of the Moore heirs.

We had been working from forty to fifty men for the two years that we were on the jail; we contrived to do a good deal of work, and in 1865, we got our first job in Boston, in the open market; it was a job on Washington street; the stone-cutters of Boston and Quincy tried to get it away from us, but did not succeed, and for the next two years, the Granite Railway Co. furnished us all the work we wanted, rather than have us go into the market; we could underbid them, and make a fair thing out of it, where they would lose money; we all worked, looked after our work, and could get hands cheaper than they could.

In 1859, and 1860, we cut the stone for the P.C. Brooks house in Medford, and the Thatcher's Island Lighthouses; we underbid the Rockport contractors \$3000.00 on the

two houses, although they were to be built in sight of their quarries, and we got a good thing out of it.

#### Addenda overlooked in the description

##### Note I.

The water is very clear, and in twenty fathoms, the sand bottom, and anything above it, is clearly visible. I remember one of our pigs, which would weigh fifty or sixty pounds, got away as we took him aboard, and jumped into the water, and started to swim ashore; before he got many rods from the ship, a shark seized him, and we could clearly see the few kicks he was able to give, before life was extinct, and he disappeared in the shark's mouth. We could plainly see the shark for ten minutes, and he did not appear to be at all inconvenienced by his tidbit.

##### Note 2

Some of the cabbage palms were forty and fifty feet high, and the hogs felled them by rooting around the bottom of the palms, and they ate the tender head in the center of the top, which somewhat resembled a cabbage in taste, hence the name. This showed a considerable degree of sagacity in the hog.

##### Note 3

About the last we landed was almost under his very nose; they put a crew of us in the whaleboat, when we knew they were watching us, and quickly throwing in a few empty kegs, pulled swiftly towards the shore; as soon as the custom house boat got well after us,



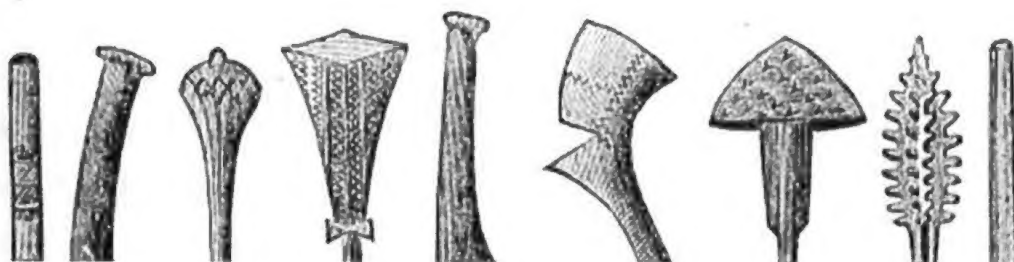
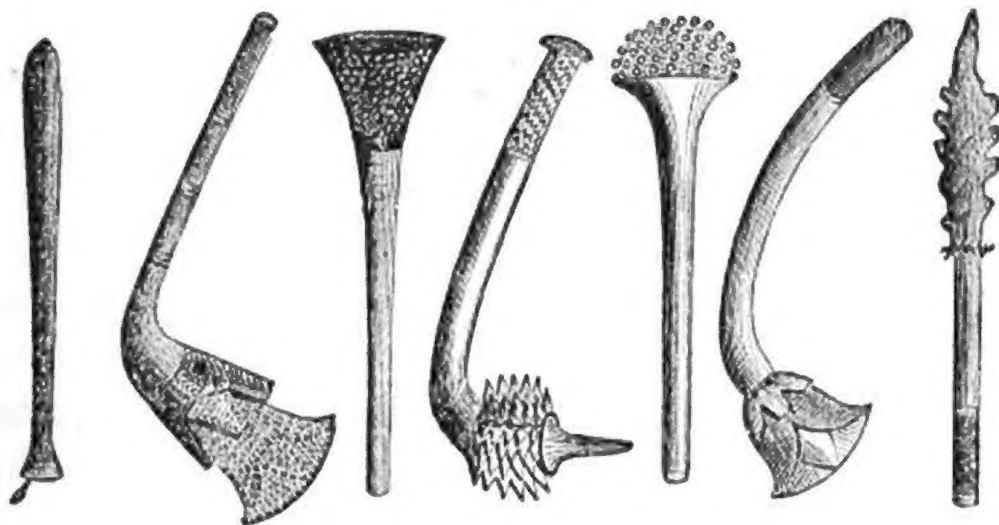
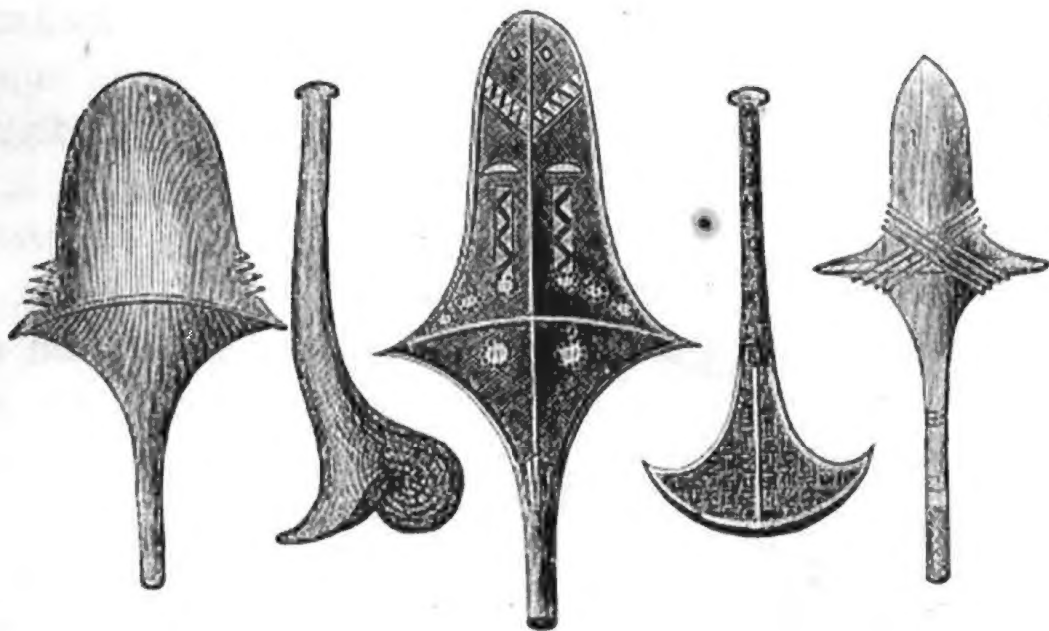
the rest of the crew quietly lowered a boat on the other side of the brig, loaded it up, pulled along the shore, and behind the island out of sight. When they were well out of the way, we let the custom house boat overtake us; they were pretty mad at the trick, but could not help seeing they were beaten.

#### SUPPLEMENT I.

The natives are very expert with their spears, and their performances were really wonderful, and their war dance something to be remembered. Their weapons consisted of spears, war-clubs, bows and arrows; they were not very expert with the bow and arrow, not nearly as skilful as our Indians. So far as I ever heard, they did not use the poisoned arrow, but some of the islanders to the north and west did; at the Fijis, they used the bow and arrow but very little, in war; their clubs were of various shapes, some with a crooked peaked head, others with a curved sharp edge, still others, with a flat end like a paddle with guards below the blades; then they had what we call the handery billy; it was a round knob some three or four inches through, with a handle about a foot in length; this they would throw with great force. All their clubs were made from a close-grained dark wood, which was very hard; we called it iron wood; the heads and handles were carved,

and many were quite ornamental; their clubs were from three to three and a half feet long,

and occasionally one of  
four feet and shaped thus:



The spears were of various shapes as above<sup>63</sup>, made from a hard wood tapering to about one-half inch at the after end, and increasing to about one and one-quarter inches at two-thirds of their length, then to a point, or to two, three, or four points; each point usually tipped with pieces of human bone, and the edges barbed with the same, all lashed on with fine sennate; they were sometimes barbed with shark's teeth.

I have seen France throw a single pointed spear fully fifty feet, through the with<sup>64</sup> on a jib-boom without touching the iron for the entire length of the spear; the with was not more than seven inches in diameter, and the spear ten or twelve feet long; I have seen him stand on the bows of the brig, and throw it through a fish, two feet under water.

In their war dances, they exercised with their clubs and spears. I was on shore with France at Bewa, and he got up a war dance to show me what great warriors he had; I should judge there were about fifty engaged in it, and none but skilled warriors could take part; they were called with a tom-tom (war-drum), which is shaped like the middle of a dug-out with the ends left in; it was dug out of a log, laid the hollow side down, and pounded on with clubs; you could hear one three miles on a still night; they accompanied it with singing.

In their dances, they formed in the square in front of the "umbora", or spirit chief's house. All of the chiefs assembled and some of the old men, and the young men and boys in the back ground; it was evening, and was lit up by fires, until it was as light as day around the dancers; they all had their faces painted black, or striped with vermillion, with necklaces of teeth, some whales, some sharks; others had breastplates of oyster shells as large as plates, hanging around their necks; the men were arranged one-half on

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<sup>63</sup> The photo is from the internet. This document is transcribed from a typed copy of George Runel's autobiography; there was no drawing.

<sup>64</sup> Does he mean withe or width here ?

one side, and one-half on the other side, about one hundred feet apart when they commenced dancing, which consisted of swaying their bodies like an inverted clock pendulum, one following the other around, singing bragging songs of what they had done, and would do, how they could kill and eat up their enemies, all the time, the two lines drawing nearer; each man carried a spear in his hand, and club fastened to his tappa; each line passed before the chiefs, bowing nearly to the ground, and singing of the prowess of their chiefs, and then back, the two lines about fifty feet apart, crouched on their haunches, with their spears in hand, with the points behind; at a given signal, every man leaped into the air with a terrific yell, whirled his spear in the air, and hurled it with all his force at the breast of his opponent, the men in each line standing about five feet apart; the two lines of spears passed each other, and pointing with unerring precision at their breasts; it was considered cowardice to step aside from the spear, but they turned their bodies "flatways," and swayed to one side, and as the spear passed their breast, they grasped it with their right hand, fingers down, whirled it with the speed of lightning, and with a yell returned it to the one opposite; thus back and forth four or five times, without stirring from their tracks; at a given signal, they dropped their spears, and grasping their clubs, sprang upon one another, and for a minute or so, one would not think there could be a whole skull left, but there had been no harm done; they then separated, swinging their clubs, singing of their prowess, and what they had done with their weapons. It was a weird scene, their great bushy heads bound up in snow-white turbans, their black bodies writhing and twisting into all manner of forms, their savage yells and the beating of the tom-tom; I drew a long breath, when it ceased. It ended with a bowl of angona<sup>65</sup> which

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<sup>65</sup> Yaqona (pron. 'angona') is the traditional drink of Fiji and is identity. It is derived from the root of the kava plant, crushed into a fine powder and then mixed with water in a 'Tanoa' or large wooden bowl..

was served to the dancers and it was nearly midnight when it broke up. They were great fishermen, and that was the main pursuit of the men, outside of war.

They make nets of sennate, some of them fine of braid, not more than one-sixteenth inch thick, and one inch mesh; they made turtle nets with six-inch mesh, and of sennate, one-quarter inch wide, and some of them are five hundred feet long.

They captured a great many turtles, some of them very large, weighing two or three hundred pounds; the turtles were of various kinds; the hawk-billed, so called, were the ones from which they took the shell of commerce; these they did not kill, but put them in large pens of several acres, made from the coral rock, and piled up above high water, being open enough so that fish and other things came through and being deep enough so that there was never less than two feet of water at low tide; once a year they took the turtles out, buried them in the sand, and built a fire on their back; they heat it hot enough so that all the top shell peeled off, leaving the edge shell unhurt; another coat will grow on in about a year, but it wants about two years to get a good thickness; they got from two to four pounds from a turtle; some large turtles that had never been shelled, when they took the whole shell off, weighed seven or eight pounds. The dark colored shell, here, at that time, was worth from eight to eleven dollars per pound; the light colored was worth about the same in China. We sorted it all; the light we sold at Manilla, and brought the dark home.

The price paid the natives was a musket for a head of shell that weighed not less than four pounds; the muskets cost at home, two dollars each, and with a large charge in them, a person would be about as safe at one end as he would at the other.

In catching the turtle, they stretched their nets near the opening in the outer reef, keeping as quiet as possible while doing it; two canoes went with the net, which had sinkers, and floats similar to ours, and stretched it to its full length, the canoes keeping hold of the ends; when they got it stretched, other canoes, which had been keeping in the background a half mile or so, would start down towards the net in a semicircle, making all the noise and splashing in the water possible, jumping overboard, and thrashing about; when they got nearly down to the net, the two canoes swung in towards the advancing canoes, until they came together; they had their particular time for netting, when the turtle came in to the reefs to feed; sometimes they got five or six at a haul, but oftener not more than one or two, sometimes none; they hauled but once at the same opening in the reef, and if they hauled again the same day, it was usually several miles from the first place; the racket scared all the turtles in the vicinity.

There was one little incident connected with a party that had been out after turtle, that nearly cost me my life; a couple of canoes loaded with women came alongside of the brig, one on each side; five or six of us were in swimming, we usually went in every day; I was swimming about forty or fifty feet from the vessel, when all of a sudden, without warning, something caught me by the feet and yanked me under water; my first thought was sharks; it pulled me down three or four feet under water; you better believe that I kicked lustily; I came to the surface strangling, managed to get hold of a rope alongside, and some of the others got hold of me, and they hauled me on board; I had no sooner come to the surface of the water, than a woman's head bobbed up alongside, laughing; she dove from her canoe from the other side of the vessel, came under it, and seeing my legs as she came up, caught hold.